THE ELIMINATOR; OR, SKELETON KEYS TO SACERDOTAL SECRETS

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Title: The Eliminator; or, Skeleton Keys to Sacerdotal Secrets

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Release Date: March 25, 2012 [EBook #39268]

Language: English

Character set encoding: UTF-8

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE ELIMINATOR; OR, SKELETON KEYS TO SACERDOTAL SECRETS ***

Produced by David Widger.

THE ELIMINATOR
or, SKELETON KEYS to SACERDOTAL SECRETS

By

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1894

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE Eliminator has now been before the public nearly two years. I have seen nothing worthy of the name of criticism respecting it. A few Unitarian ministers have said that Christ must have been a person instead of a personification, for the reason that men could not have conceived of such a perfect character without a living example, and that the great influence exercised by him for so long a time, over so many people, proves him to have been an historic character. These arguments are anticipated and fully answered. (See pp. 283, 284, 306.)

Our Unitarian friends are the greatest *idealists* upon the globe! They only accept the Gospel biography of Jesus (and we have no other) just so far as the story accords with what they think it ought to be. They deny the immaculate conception and miraculous birth of the Christ, and have very great doubts about his crucifixion and resurrection. Their Christ is purely *ideal.* The fact is that Christendom has worshipped the literal Jesus for the ideal Christ for nearly twenty centuries, though their conceptions of him have been manifold and contradictory. No wonder that so many intelligent Christian sects in the early ages of the [Pg iv] church utterly denied the existence of Jesus as an historic person. (See pp. 266, 267, 357.) But there is indubitable evidence that this *Christ character* (called by many Unitarians the "Universal Christ") was mainly *mythical, drawn from the astrological riddles of the older Pagan mythologies.*

In fact, almost everything in Christianity seems to have been an *afterthought.* It is the least original of any of the ten great religions of the world, and the great mistake has been in making almost everything *literal* which the wise men of ancient times regarded as *allegorical.* This comes from the priestly attempt to identify the *Jewish Jesus* with the *Oriental Christ* Tradition is, in fact, the main foundation of the Christian scheme, and cunning sacerdotalists have done by artifice what history, in fact, has failed to do. But for its moral precepts and its "enthusiasm of humanity," Christianity would not survive for a single century. The so-called "Apostles' Creed" (which was not formulated until centuries after

the last Apostle slept in the grave), and which is repeated in so many churches every Sunday, has a greater number of historical and theological misstatements than any other writing of the same length now extant!

There is in our day a general disposition to magnify the virtues of the Christ of the New Testament, connected with a proposition to unite all Christians in his leadership. This device will not succeed, because it is as impossible to found a
(v) perfect religion upon an imperfect man as it is upon a fallible Book. Lovers of the truth will show that the traditional Christ is not a perfect model. (See Chapter xiii.) There is a most significant sense in which it may be truthfully said: "Never man spake like this man," as no great moral teacher ever uttered so many things that needed to be revised and explained!

May it not be the fact that both Catholic and Protestant Christians are under a great delusion as to the facts of religion? I think so. I believe so. I well know how difficult it is to explode a delusion that is nearly twenty centuries old, and that is supported by a sacerdotalism of vast wealth and learning, and whose votaries by "this craft have their wealth."

I nail these *Thèses* to the church doors of all the Catholics and Protestants in Christendom, and with Martin Luther, at the Diet of Worms, I exclaim, "Here I stand. I cannot move! God help me!" If I am mistaken, then my reason is at fault and all history is a lie! It is said that when Renan died, the Pope inquired whether he had confessed before his de-cease, and upon being told that he had not, replied, "Well, then God will have to save him for his sincerity!" I am ready to be judged on this ground. I sum up my latest conclusions thus: The Jesus of the Gospels is *traditional*, the Christ of the New Testament is *mythical*.

R. B. WESTBROOK.

1707 Oxford Street,
Philadelphia.
October 1, 1894.

PREFACE

MANY things in this book will greatly shock, and even give heartfelt pain to, numerous persons whom I greatly respect. I have a large share of the love

of approbation, and naturally desire the good opinion of those with whom I have been associated in a long life. There is no pleasure in the fact that I have to stand quite alone in the eyes of nearly all Christendom. There is no satisfaction in being deemed a disturber of the peace of the great majority of those "professing and calling themselves Christians." But, at the same time, I must not be indifferent in matters where I believe truth is concerned.

Before I withdrew from the orthodox ministry I used to wonder why God in his gracious providence had not seen fit to so order events as to give us a credible and undoubted history of the incarnation and birth of his Son Jesus Christ, and why that Saviour, who had come to repair the great evils inflicted upon our race by Adam, had never once mentioned that unfortunate fall.

I do not deny that there was a person named Jesus nearly nineteen hundred years ago. I think there were several persons bearing this name and who were
(3) contemporaneous, and that several of them were very good men; but that any one of them was *such* a person as is described in the Gospels I cannot believe. I lay special emphasis on the word such. Admitting for the sake of the argument the real, historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth, he has by the process of *idealization* become an *impersonation*, and I have so attempted to make it appear; and I cannot but think that this view is not inconsistent with the most enlightened piety and religious devotion, while this explanation relieves us of many things which are absurd and contradictory.

I desire to explain more fully than appears in the *Table of Contents* the plan of this book. I first combat the policy of *suppression and deception*, and insist that the whole truth shall be published, and have shown that sacerdotalism is responsible for the fact that it has not been done. As so-called Christianity is based upon Judaism, I undertake to show the fabulous character of many of the claims of the Jews, disclaiming all intention to asperse the character of Israelites of the present generation.

I thought it proper in this connection to give the substance of an *open letter* to the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on *Moses and the Pentateuch*—to which His Honor never responded—showing that the "law of Sinai was not the first of which we have any knowledge," and that Moses was not "the greatest statesman and lawgiver the world had ever produced," as the Chief-Justice had
(5) affirmed in a lecture before the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Presenting brief views of the symbolic character of the Old Testament, and showing how "Astral Keys" unlock many Bible stories, I undertake to show that the so-called fall of Adam is a *fable*, nothing more; and then, as the *first* Adam is shown to be a *myth*, I go in search for the "*last Adam*." Finding no knowledge of such a person except in the New Testament, I deem it necessary to briefly show the character of this book, that it may be determined how far it should be received

as evidence in a matter of so much importance. Then in five chapters, more or less connected, I combat the idea of the historical, or rather *traditional*, Jesus, and follow with an examination of the evangelical dogma of *Blood-Salvation*, and close with a very brief summary of the *Things that Remain* as the foundation of faith.

I do not expect *caste* clergymen to read this book any farther than is necessary to denounce it. It is their way of meeting questions like those herein discussed. I am prepared to have certain *dilettanti* sneer-ingly say, "This book is of no critical value." They are so accustomed to "scholarly essays" which "are poetically sentimental and floridly vague" that they have little respect for anything else. The book is intended for the common people, and not for the professional critics.

I do not expect everybody to agree with me, especially at first. Truth can afford to wait, and in years to come many points that I have made, which are now
(6) so startling, will be calmly and intelligently accepted.

There are probably mistakes in the book—mistakes in names, in dates, and perhaps in facts; but these will not affect the main argument. No man knows everything. Until recently it was never suspected by the learned world that *The Contemplative Life* was not written by Philo nearly nineteen centuries ago, instead of being written by a monk in the third century of the Christian era. Even Macaulay and Bancroft have made mistakes, and so have many other authors of good repute.

I have always tried to preserve a *reverent spirit*—a genuine respect for true religion and morality. I have always been profoundly religious, and cannot remember the time when I was not devout. But I do not believe that it is ever proper "to do evil that good may come." In this work I have sought only the *truth*, in the firm conviction that superstition and falsehood cannot promote a course of *right living*, which is the object and aim of all true religion.

I have a supreme disregard for literary fame. I do not shrink from being called a *compiler* or even a *plagiarist*. There is absolutely very little of real *originality* in the world. I could have followed the course of many writers and *absorbed or assimilated*, and thus seemingly made my own what they had written; but I have chosen to quote freely, and so have substantially given the words of many authors of repute, and at the same time saved myself the labor of a re-coining, which does
(7) not, after all, deceive the intelligent reader. The books from which I largely quote are mainly voluminous and very expensive, and some of them are out of print. I am indebted to the learned foot-notes of Evan Powell Meredith in his prize essay on *The Prophet of Nazareth* for several things, and must not fail to acknowledge my obligations to certain living authors for valuable assistance, and especially to my friend Dr. Alexander Wilder, who prepared at my request the substance of Chapter X., *The Drama of the Gospels*, and who, in my judgment, has few superiors in classical and Oriental literature.

I sympathize with those persons who will complain-ingly exclaim, "You have taken away my Saviour, and I know not where you have laid him." But suppose that we do not *need a Saviour* in the evangelical sense? Suppose that man has not *fallen*, but that the race has been *rising* these many centuries; and that while we have mainly to save ourselves, all the good and great men of all ages have aided us in the work of salvation by what they have said and done and suffered, so that instead of one savior we really have had many saviors. I think that this view is more reasonable and consoling than the commercial device of what is called the "scheme of redemption," besides having scientific facts to sustain it.

I have preserved on the title-page some of my college degrees, to indicate my professional studies of theology and law, and not from motives of pedantry.

R. B. WESTBROOK.

1707 Oxford Street,
Philadelphia.[pg 9]

SKELETON KEYS TO SACERDOTAL SECRETS

CHAPTER I. THE WHOLE TRUTH

"For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."—Luke 12: 2, 3.

THE assumption is general that if the faith of the common people should be unsettled as to some things which they have heretofore been taught regarding religion, they would immediately reject all truth, and fall into a most deplorable state of skepticism and infidelity, and that the existing institutions of religion would be destroyed, and public virtue so undermined as to endanger the very foundations of morality and civil government. This is not only the fear of conservative and timid clergymen, but many of our prominent statesmen seem anxious lest the enlightenment of the people in matters in which they have been cruelly deceived should so weaken the restraints of police and governmental authority as
(10) to result in universal anarchy and a general disregard of the rights of property, and even of the sacredness of human life.

These foolish fears show a great want of confidence in human nature, and falsely assume that moral character depends mainly upon an unquestioning faith in certain dogmas which, in point of fact, have no necessary connection with it.

The statistics of crime show that a very large majority of those who have been seized by the strong arm of the law as dangerous members of society are those who most heartily believe in those very dogmas of theology which we are warned not to criticise, though we may know them to be accretions of ignorance and superstition, and that some of them have a natural tendency to fetter the essential principles of true religion and that higher code of morality which alone can stand strong under all circumstances. It is safe to affirm that ninety-nine hundredths of the criminal class believe, or profess to believe, in the dogmas of the dominant theology, Romish and Protestant; which are essentially the same.

It is too often forgotten that the very first condition of good government is faith in human nature, confidence in the people. You always excite dishonor and dishonesty by treating men as if you think them all rogues, and as if you expect nothing good from them, but every conceivable evil, only as they may be
(11) restrained by the fear of pains and penalties in this life and after death.

One great fundamental mistake of theologians and dogmatic pietists is the baseless assumption that religion is something supernatural, not to say antinatural; something external to human nature and of foreign origin; something to be received by transfusion as the result or consequence of faith in certain dogmas or the observance of external rites; something bottled up by the Church, like rare and precious medicines in an apothecary-shop, to be dealt out to those who are willing to follow priestly prescriptions and pay the required price.

The fact is, churches and scriptures and dogmas are the outcome of that religious element which is inherent in human nature. It cannot be too often or too strongly urged that the religious principle is *innate* and *ineradicable* in mankind, and that you might as well try to destroy man's love of the beautiful, his desire for knowledge, his love of home and kindred, or even his appetite for food, as to

try to destroy it. It is as natural to feel the want of religion as it is to be hungry. You *cannot^ destroy the foundations of religion. They rest in *nature* and antedate all creeds and churches, and will survive them.

Even Professor Tyndall says: "The facts of religious feeling are to me as certain as the facts of physics."

... "The world will have religion of some kind."... "You who have escaped from these religions into the high and dry light of intellect may deride them, but in doing so you deride accidents of form merely, and fail to touch the immovable
(12) basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man. To yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction is the problem of problems at this hour."

Renan also writes thus: "All the symbols which serve to give shape to the religious sentiment are imperfect, and their fate is to be one after another rejected. But nothing is more remote from the truth than the dream of those who seek to imagine a perfected humanity without religion."... "Devotion is as natural as egoism to a true-born man. The organization of devotion *is* religion. Let no one hope, therefore, to dispense with religion or religious associations. Each progression of modern society will render this want more imperious."

We use the word religion as it was used by Cicero, in the sense of *scruple*, implying the consciousness of a natural obligation wholly irrespective of what one may believe concerning the gods. Religion in its true meaning is the great fact of *duty, of oughtness*, consisting in an honest and persistent effort to realize ideal excellence and to transform it into actual character and practical life. Religion as a *spirit* and a life is objected to by none, but is admired and commended by all. It is superstition, bigotry, credulity, and dogma that are detestable. The religious instinct has been perverted, turned into wrong channels, made subservient to priestcraft and kingcraft, but its basic principle remains for ever firm. If it *could* have been destroyed, the machinations of priests would have annihilated it long
(13) ago. Give yourselves no anxiety about the corner-stone of religion, but look well to the rotten superstructures that have been reared upon it. Its professed friends are often its real enemies. It is the false prophet who is afraid to have his oracles subjected to tests of reason and history. It is the evil-doer who is afraid of the light, the conscious thief who objects to being searched. An honest man would say, "Let the truth be published, though the heavens fell."

The whole truth should be published, as a matter of common honesty, if nothing more. We have no moral right to conceal the truth, any more than we have to proclaim falsehood. He who deliberately does the one will not hesitate long about doing the other. And this is one of the most serious aspects of this subject. He who can bring himself to practise deceit regarding religion will soon be a villain at heart, even if worldly prudence is strong enough to keep him out of the penitentiary.

As a rule, the unfaithful teacher inflicts a greater evil upon his own soul than upon his unsuspecting dupe. The deceiver is sure to be overtaken by his own deceit. Mean men become more mean, and liars come to believe their own oft-repeated falsehoods. This principle may in part account for the fact that in all ages dishonest, mercenary, designing priests have been most corrupt citizens and ready tools in the hands of tyrants to oppress and enslave the people.

Every deceptive act blunts the moral sense, defiles and sears the conscience,
(14) until at last the hypocrite degenerates into a slimy, subtle human serpent that always crawls upon its belly and eats dust. Secretiveness and deceitfulness become a second nature, and show themselves continually even in the ordinary affairs of life. The reflex influence of deception upon the deceiver himself is its most bitter condemnation.

But modern preachers have a way of justifying their evasions and prevarications by saying that even Jesus himself withheld from his own disciples some things, for the reason that they were "not able to bear them," quite overlooking the fact that he is also reported to have said, "When the Spirit of truth has come, he will teach you all things," and that other passage (Luke 12: 2), where Jesus is represented as saying, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

If after eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching the time has not yet come to proclaim the whole truth, it is not likely to come for many ages in the future. If religion is a mystery too great to be comprehended, too sacred for reverent but untrammelled investigation, something that can only exist with a blind, unreasoning credulity and the utter stultification of the natural faculties of a true manhood, then religion is not worth what it costs and should be exposed as a
(15) delusion and a snare.

The time for the religious *Kabala* has passed, and ambiguities, concealments, and evasions are no longer to be tolerated. Martin Luther builded better than he knew when he proclaimed the right of private judgment in matters of religion. It has taken two hundred years for this fundamental principle to become thoroughly accepted by the people; but so firmly is it now established that bigoted ecclesiastics might as well attempt to resist the trend of an earthquake, stop the rising of the sun, and turn the light of noonday into the darkness of midnight as to attempt to arrest the progress of a true religious rationalism. The mad ravings of fanatics will have no more influence than the pope's bull had on the comet. Learning is no longer monopolized by a few monks and ministers. For every five clergymen who are abreast with the times, the progress of modern thought, and the conclusions of science, there are fifty laymen who are familiar with the writings of Humboldt,

Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, and scores of other scientists, to whom the world is more indebted for true progress than to all the lazy monks and muttering priests who have lived since the world began. The fact is, the old delusion that men must look to the sacerdotal class exclusively, or even mainly, for religious truth, has been for ever banished from the minds of intelligent men. The literature of the day is full of free thought and downright rationalism, and even the secular newspaper is a missionary of religious progress and reform, and brings
(16) stirring messages of intellectual progress every day to our breakfast-tables. The world moves, and those who attempt to stop it are sure to be crushed.

The pretence that anything is too sacred for investigation and publication will not stand the light of this wide-awake nineteenth century.

It is often said that the common people are not ready for the whole truth. In 1873, Dr. J. G. Holland, then editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, wrote to Dr. Augustus Blauvelt declining to publish an article on "The Divine and Infallible Inspiration of the Bible," and added, "I believe you are right. I should like to speak your words to the world; but if I do speak them it will pretty certainly cost me my connection with the magazine. This sacrifice I am willing to make if duty requires it. I am afraid of nothing but doing injury to the cause I love.... In short, you see that I sincerely doubt whether the Christian world is ready for this article.... Instead of the theologians the *people* would howl.... I cannot yet carry my audience in such a revolution. Perhaps I shall be able to do so by and by, but as I look at it to-day it seems impossible.... My dear friend, I believe in you. You are in advance of your time. You have great benefits in your hands for your time. You are free and true. And I mourn sadly and in genuine distress that I cannot speak your words with a tongue which all my fellow-Christians can hear. They will not hear them yet. They will some time...."

(17) Dr. Holland has passed away and cannot reply to criticism. Let us be kind and charitable. He intended to be right, but he was mistaken. The people do not howl when the truth is published, even though their prejudices may be aroused; and no tedious preparation is now necessary to be able to hear the whole truth. The masses of the people are hungry for knowledge, and it is high time that they be honestly fed. They now more than half suspect that they have been deceived by those some of whom they have educated by their charities and liberally paid to teach them the truth. When, in 1875, *Scribner's Monthly* did publish Dr. Blauvelt's articles on "Modern Skepticism," it was not the people that "howled." It was the clergy. Some of them demanded a new editor; others warned the people from the pulpit not to patronize *Scribner*; and one distinguished man declared that the magazine must be "stamped out," and at once organized a most powerful ecclesiastical combination against the freedom of the press; and yet the *North American Review* and other similar magazines are today doing more to settle long-mooted

religious questions than all the pulpits in Christendom; and the people do not howl. No respectable enterprising publisher now hesitates to publish a book of real merit, however much its doctrines may differ from the dominant faiths. The masses of the people are determined to know all that can be known of the history, philosophy, and principles of religion; and the greater the effort to conceal and suppress the truth the stronger will be the demand for its full and undisguised
(18) proclamation.

That there is a general drifting away from the old formulas of religious doctrine everybody knows, and yet there is more practical religion in the world today than in any previous age. It does not consist in fastings and attendance upon ecclesiastical rites and ordinances; but it takes the form of universal education, of providing homes for friendless infancy and old age, of the prevention of cruelty to children and even to brute animals, of the more rational and humane treatment of lunatics, paupers, and criminals, ameliorating the miseries of prisons and hospitals,—in short, of elevating and improving the condition of universal humanity. These truly religious works do not depend upon any particular statement of religious belief, for all sects and persons of no sect are equally engaged in them.

Charities would not cease if all creeds should be abandoned or should be so revised as not to be recognized by the disciples of Calvin and Wesley, and if every priest in the land should henceforth give up the mummeries and puerilities of the Dark Ages.

Religion, as the "enthusiasm of humanity," the cultivation of all the virtues, and the practice of the highest morality growing out of the inalienable rights of man in all the relations of life, is a fixed fact. It is a natural endowment, coeval with humanity in its development and progress, and is as absolutely indestructible as manhood itself.

So far from being true is the assumption that religion would be imperilled
(19) by the exposure of the false dogmas of theology and the heathenish rites and superstitious ceremonies of ecclesiasticism, it is clear to many minds that the myths of dogmatic theology and the absurdities of primitive ages are the chief obstacles in the way of the free course of true religion; and it may safely be affirmed that the distinguishing dogmas of the dominant theology, Catholic and Protestant, as will hereafter be shown, are essentially demoralizing and logically *tend* to undermine and corrupt public virtue. It is not intended to affirm that churches and theologians do no good and that their entire influence is bad. They teach much that is humane in principle and moral in practice, and so do good for society. Nevertheless, it is true that much of the rotten morality of the times can be philosophically traced to the influence of a false theology. The main dogmas of Romish and orthodox Protestant creeds are false, and it is absurd to suppose that a pure system of public virtue can be founded upon ignorance, superstition, and falsehood.

But, after all, we are asked, Does it make any odds what one believes if he is only sincere in his faith?

The obvious answer is, that the more sincerely you believe a lie the more dangerous is your faith. The more trustfully you build upon a sandy foundation the sooner and greater will be the fall and ruin of the superstructure. The more implicitly you confide in a dishonest partner or agent the more successful will be his robbery. There is no safety in error and falsehood. The Westminster divines
(20) well said, "Truth is in order to righteousness." There can be no true righteousness inherent in a system of superstition and falsehood. The failure of the Church to reach the masses and to establish a condition of public honesty superior to the ancient heathen morality shows that there must be some serious defect in its methods.

But the crushing objection to theological agitation and free discussion is the common one that "it is unwise to unsettle and destroy the faith of the people in the dominant theology unless there is something better to offer them as a substitute."

There is something better. Truth is always better and safer than falsehood. In the discussions which are to follow an attempt will be made to show that there is a *natural religion* which accords with enlightened reason, and which cannot fail to furnish a firm scientific foundation for *the highest morality*. The common saying, that "it is better to have a false religion than no religion," contains two groundless assumptions—viz. that it is possible for a man to have *no* religion, and that that which is false may be dignified with the name *religion*. It is about time that things should be called by their right names, and that superstition and falsehood should not be deemed necessary to public morality.

For a religion (so called) of superstition and falsehood there must be a religion of *natural science*that cannot be overthrown, and which cannot fail to make its way among men as knowledge shall increase and the principles of true religious philosophy shall be [pg 21] better understood. We should not be frightened at the cowardly cry of "destructive criticism." We *must* pull down before we can reconstruct.

CONCLUSIONS.

(1) To imitate the example of the early Christian Fathers in fraud, falsehood, and forgery for the promotion of religion is a policy that is too shocking to the moral sense of civilized men everywhere to be tolerated. To withhold or suppress the truth is a crime against humanity and contrary to the spirit of this age; and those who do it are the enemies of progress and unworthy to be recognized as the authoritative teachers of the world.

(2) Those who publish that which is false or suppress what is true not only do a great wrong to the people, but, if possible, do a greater wrong to their

own souls, and must suffer the consequences. They must have an awful reckoning with eternal, retributive justice.

(3) It is a most egregious mistake to suppose that the people cannot be trusted with the whole truth—that their sense of right is so dull and flimsy that on the slightest discovery of the errors in which they have been instructed from infancy they would lose confidence in all truth and rightfulness and rush riotously to ruin. If the people must be hoodwinked for ever, then the distinguishing principle of the Protestant Reformation and the basic principles of our American Declaration of Independence and republican government
(22) are false and delusive, and we should return to mediæval times and to feudal and autocratic government in Church and State.

(4) It is high time that men should see that dogma is not religion; that blind faith is more to be feared than rational skepticism and scientific investigation; that whatever is opposed to reason and science in theology can be spared, not only without any loss, but greatly to the advantage of true religion and sound morality. All the religion that is worth having is *natural and rational*, and corresponds with the facts of the universe as they are demonstrated by the crucibles of science and the inductions of a sound philosophy. The principal moral obligations of men grow out of their relations to each other in life, and nothing can be more complete than the Golden Rule, emphasized in the Sermon on the Mount, but as clearly taught in the Jewish *Babylonian Talmud*, and in the twenty-fourth Maxim of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, and many others centuries before the Christian era.

(5) Instead of loading down religion with Oriental myths and fables, instead of a gorgeous ritualism and surpliced priests, borrowed literally from the ancient paganism, instead of dogmas and creeds and unquestioning faith and blind submission to ecclesiastical dictation and rule, we want sound moral instruction in the great fundamental truths of nature and of science, which will always be found to strengthen and confirm the principles of true religion. These are the sources from which to gain light. We want
(23) less creed and more ethical culture, less profession and paraphernalia in religious worship and more practical philosophy and common sense.

(6) The man who in scientific matters would make false representations and conceal the real truth would be deemed an impostor, and the time has come when hypocrites and cowards in theology should be made to feel their degradation and be forced into an open abandonment of "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain." If we would scorn delusions in natural philosophy,

if we would correct errors in oceanic charts, astronomical diagrams, and geographical maps, why should we hesitate to correct the most egregious blunders regarding those things which are infinitely more important? Can we with any proper sense of propriety and right connive at falsehood and uphold and strengthen it by our silence and cowardly negligence in failing to expose it? Are not all delusions debasing and opposed to the progress of truth and the elevation of mankind? In all the departments of human knowledge religion and morality are most imperative in their demands for pure and unadulterated truth; and he who does not recognize this fact sins grievously against his own soul, against the human family, and against the truth and its eternal Author, the God of all truth.

(7) Finally, let it not be overlooked that it will not, for many reasons, be possible much longer to keep the people in ignorance, and to palm off upon them myths for veritable history and a system of theology plainly at variance with the conclusions of science, the facts of history, and the spiritual and
(24) moral consciousness of every true and well-developed man. The schoolmaster is abroad, and the spirit of fearless investigation is in the air, and men *will,* sooner or later, find out what is true; and when they come to understand how they have been imposed upon by their cowardly teachers, a fearful *reaction* will be the result; and woe to the hypocrite and time-server when that time comes! It is therefore not only good principle, but good policy, to tell the whole truth now. The following copy of a book-notice well describes the prevalent policy regarding matters of faith:

"A theory of religious philosophy which is much commoner among us than most of us think, but which has never been expressed so fully or so attractively as in the story of Marius.

"'Submit,' it seems to say, 'to the religious order about you, accept the common beliefs, or at least behave as if you accepted them, and live habitually in the atmosphere of feeling and sensation which they have engendered and still engender; surrender your feeling while still maintaining the intellectual citadel intact; pray, weep, dream with the majority while you think with the elect; only so will you obtain from life all it has to give, its most delicate flavor, its subtlest aroma.'" Against such a *sham* the writer heartily protests, as against the villainous maxim, quoted from memory, accredited to Aristotle: "*Think* with the sages and philosophers, but *talk* like the common people." Come what may, let us cease to profess
(25) what we have ceased to believe.

"The two learned people of the village," says Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, telling of his fanciful Arrowhead Village, "were the rector and the doctor. These two worthies kept up the old controversy between the professions which grows

out of the fact that one studies nature from below upward, and the other from above downward. The rector maintained that physicians contracted a squint which turns their eyes inwardly, while the muscles which roll their eyes upward become palsied. The doctor retorted that theological students developed a third eyelid—the *nictitating membrane*, which is so well known in birds, and which serves to shut out, not all light, but *all the light they do not want*."

The Presbyterians have provided for a *revision* of their creed, though they have stultified themselves by certain restrictions, *shutting out the light they do not want!* Let us hope that the time will soon come when men will be honest enough and brave enough to follow the truth wherever it may lead. Let there be perfect veracity above all things, more especially in matters of religion. It is not a question of courtesies which deceive no one. To profess what is not believed is immoral. Immorality and untruth can never lead to morality and virtue; all language which conveys untruth, either in substance or appearance, should be amended so that words can be understood in their recognized meanings, without equivocal
(26) explanations or affirmations. Let historic facts have their true explanation.

CHAPTER II. SACERDOTALISM IMPEACHED

"The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money."—Micah 3: 11.

"Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."—1 Sam. 2: 36.

THE cognomens priest, prophet, presbyter, preacher, parson, and pastor have certain things in common, and these titles may therefore be used interchangeably.

As far back as history extends, the office or order now represented by the clerical profession existed. It was as common among pagan tribes in the remotest periods as among Jews and Christians in more modern times. Service done to the gods by the few in behalf of the many is the primary idea of the priestly

function. It has always and everywhere been the profession and prerogative of the priests to pretend to approach nearest to the gods and to propitiate them; on account of which they have always been supposed to have special influence with the reigning deity and to be the authorized expounders and interpreters of the divine oracles. The priesthood has always been a *caste, a "holy order;"* and it was no less so among ancient Jews than among modern Christians. In all churches
(27) clergymen *ex-officio* exercise certain sacred prerogatives. They occupy select seats in every sanctuary. They lead in every act of worship. They preside over every sacred ceremony. They exclusively administer the ordinances of religion. They baptize the children and give or withhold the "Holy Communion." They celebrate our marriages, visit our sick, and conduct our funerals. In Romish churches and in some of our Protestant churches they pretend to pronounce "absolution" and to seal the postulant for the heavenly rest. It is not necessary, now and here, to speak of the evil influence that these pretensions exert upon the common people, nor of the light in which intelligent, thinking women and men commonly regard them; but it is appropriate to note the reflex influence which such assumptions have upon the clergy themselves, disqualifying them for such rational presentation of doctrinal truth as their hearers have a right to expect.

The pride of his order makes it humiliating for the priest to admit that what he does not know is worth knowing. Claiming to be the authorized expounder of God's will, how can he admit that he can possibly be in error in any matter relating to religion? In view of the high pretensions of his order, founded, as he claims, upon a plenarily-inspired and infallible book-revelation, and he professing to be specially called and sanctified by God himself as his representative, it would be ecclesiastical treason to admit, even by implication, that he is not in possession of all
(28) truth. Regarding his creed as a finality, his mind becomes narrow, circumscribed, and unprogressive. He was taught from childhood that "to doubt is to be damned," and through all his novitiate he was warned against being unsettled by the delusions of reason and the wiles of infidelity. His professional education has been narrow, one-sided, sectarian. He has seldom, if ever, read anything outside of his own denominational literature, and has heard little from anybody but his own theological professors and associates. He suspects that Humboldt, Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall are all infidels, and that the sum and substance of Evolution, as taught by Darwin, is that man is the lineal descendant of the monkey.

Some persons think that ministers are often selected from among weaklings in the family fold. However, this may be, the absorption of the "holy-orders" idea, and the natural self-assurance and self-satisfaction that belong to a caste profession, render delusive the hope that anything original can ever come from such a source. Whether weak at first or not, the habits of thought and the peculiar training of young ecclesiastics are almost sure to dwarf them intellectually for life.

The theological student has become the *butt* in wide-awake society everywhere, and his appearance in public is the occasion for jests and ridicule over his sanctimonious vanity and silly pride. The extreme clerical costume which he is sure to assume excites the disgust of sensible people, though he may march through the street and up the aisle with the regulation step of the "order," and suppose himself
(29) to be the object of reverent admiration on the part of all beholders. No wonder that the churches complain that few young men of ability enter the ministry in these modern times.

The priestly office has always been deemed one of great influence, so that ancient kings were accustomed to assume it. This was true of the kings of ancient Egypt, and the practice was kept up among the Greeks and Romans. Even Constantine, the first Christian emperor (so called), continued to exercise the function of a pagan priest after his professed conversion to Christianity, and he was not initiated into the Christian Church by baptism until just before his death. One excommunicated king lay for three days and nights in the snow in the courtyard before the Pope would grant him an audience! The "Pontifex-Maximus" idea of the Roman emperors was the real foundation of the "temporal power" claimed by the bishops of Rome. Kingcraft and priestcraft have always been in close alliance. When the king was not a priest he always used the priest; and the priest has generally been willing to be used on the side of the king as against the people when liberally subsidized by the reigning potentate. Moreover, priestcraft has always been ambitious for power, and sometimes has been so influential as to make the monarch subservient to the monk. More than one proud crown has been humbly removed in token of submission to priestly authority, and powerful sovereigns have been obliged to submit to the most menial exactions and humiliations at
(30) ecclesiastical mandates. The priestly rôle has always been to utilize the religious sentiment for the subjection of the credulous to the arbitrary influence of the caste or order.

Priestcraft never could afford to have a conscience, so admitted, and therefore it has not shrunk from the commission of any crime that could augment its dominion. Its greatest success has been in the work of demoralization. It has always been the corrupter of religion. The ignorance and superstition of the people and the perversions of the religious sentiment, innate in man, have been the stock in trade of the craft in all ages, and are to-day.

It will be shown later how the whole system of dogmatic theology, Romish and Protestant (for the system is the same), has been formed so as to aggrandize the priest, perpetuate his power, and hold the masses in strict subjection. This is a simple matter of fact. History is philosophy teaching by example, and often repeats itself, and it seldom gives an example of a priestly caste or "holy" order of men leading in a great practical reform. The dominant priestly idea is to protect

the interests of the *order*, not to promote the welfare of the people.

In view of these principles and facts, and others which might be presented, it is reasonable to conclude that we cannot expect the whole living, unadulterated truth, even if they had it, from the professional clergy. The caste idea renders it essentially unnatural and philosophically impossible.

(31) But there are other potent reasons why such expectation is vain. All Christendom is covered with numerous sects in the form of ecclesiastical judicatories, each claiming to be the true exponent of all religious truth. The Romish Church is pre-eminently priestly and autocratic. The priesthood is the Church, and the people only belong to the Church; that is, belong to the priesthood, and that, too, in a stronger sense than at first seems to attach to the word *belong*. Then the priesthood itself is subdivided into castes.:

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“Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite ’em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas; and so—ad infinitum”
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When Patrick J. Ryan was installed Archbishop in Philadelphia, an office conferred by a foreign potentate, our own city newspapers in flaming headlines called it “The Enthronement of a Priest!” And so it was. He sat upon a throne and received the honors of a prince. He is called “His Grace,” and wears the royal purple in the public streets. Bishops are higher than the “inferior clergy,” and the priest, presbyter, or elder is of a higher caste than the deacon, and all are higher and more holy than the people. All ministers exercise functions which would be deemed sacrilege in a layman. The same odious spirit of caste prevails in fact, if not so prominently in form, in all orthodox denominations, especially as to the distinction between the clergy and the laity. Even Quakers have higher seats for “recommended ministers.”

Moreover, priests have laid down creeds containing certain affirmations and
(32) denials which are called “Articles of Religion,” to which all students of divinity and candidates for holy orders must subscribe before they can be initiated into the sacred arcana.

The professor in the theological seminary, who perhaps was selected for the chair quite as much for his conservatism as for his learning, has taken a pledge, if not an oath, that he will teach the young aspirant for ecclesiastical honors nothing at variance with the standards of his denomination; which covenant he is very sure to keep (having other professors and aspirants for professorships to watch him) in full view of the penalty of dismission from his chair and consequent ecclesiastical degradation. The very last place on this earth where one might expect

original research, thorough investigation, and fearless proclamation of the whole truth is in a theological school. A horse in a bark-mill becomes blind in consequence of going round and round in the same circular path; and the theological professor in his treadmill cannot fail to become purblind as regards all new truth.

What can be expected from the *graduates* of such seminaries?

The theological novitiate sits with trembling reverence at the feet of the venerable theological Gamaliel. From his sanctified lips he is to learn all wisdom. Without his approbation he cannot receive the coveted diploma. Without his recommendation he will not be likely to receive an early call to a desirable parish.

The student is *obliged* to find in the Bible just what his Church requires, and
(33) nothing more and nothing less. In order to be admitted into the clerical caste and have holy hands laid upon his youthful head he must believe or profess to believe, *ipsissima verba*, just what the "Confession" and "Catechism" contain. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller once said in a sort of confidential undertone, "What is the use of examining candidates for the ministry at all as to what they believe? The fact that they apply for admission shows that they intend to answer all questions as we expect them to answer; else, they very well know, we would not admit them."

The ecclesiastical system is emphatically an iron-bedstead system. If a candidate is too long, it cuts him shorter; and if too short, it stretches him. He must be made to fit. Then, after "ordination" or "consecration," the new-fledged theologian enters upon his public work so pressed by the cares of his charge and the social and professional demands upon his time that he finds it impossible to prepare a lecture and two original sermons a week; so he falls back upon the "notes" he took from the lips of his "old professor" in the divinity school, or upon some of those numerous "skeletons" and "sketches" of sermons expressly published for the "aid" of busy young ministers; and he gives to "his people" a dish of theological hash, if not of re-hash, instead of pouring out his own living words that should breathe and thoughts that should burn.

Hence it is easy to see why one scarcely ever gets a fresh, living truth from
(34) the pulpit. It is almost always the same old, old story of commonplace fossils that the wide-awake world has outgrown long ago, and that modern science has fearlessly consigned to the "bats and the moles" of the Dark Ages. No wonder the pulpit platitudes fail to attract the masses of earnest men, especially in our great cities.

Then if a clergyman should discover, after years of thought and study, that he has been in error in some matters, and that a pure rational interpretation of the Bible is possible, and he really feels that the creeds, as well as the Scriptures, need revising, what can he do? If he lets his new light shine, he will share the fate of Colenso, Robertson Smith, Augustus Blauvelt, Professor Woodrow, and scores of others. He knows that heresy-hunters are on the scent of his track. The

mad-dog cry of *Heretic* would be as fatal as a sharp shot from the ecclesiastical rifle. Proscription, degradation, ostracism, stare him in the face. Few men who have the *esprit de corps* of ecclesiasticism and a reasonable regard for personal comfort and preferment are heroic enough to face the social exclusion, financial ruin, and beggary for themselves and families which are almost sure to follow a trial and condemnation for heresy. If the newly-enlightened minister escapes the inquisition of a heresy trial by declaring himself independent, he has a gauntlet to run in which many poisoned arrows will be sure to pierce his quivering spirit. It is true that some sects have no written creed and no trials for heresy; but even
(35) among them there is an *implied* standard of what is "regular," and more than one grand soul knows by a sorrowful experience, what it is to belong to the "left wing" of the Liberal army, and to follow the "spirit of truth" outside of the implied creed.

Another reason why the whole truth cannot be expected from the regular clergy is, the influence of their pecuniary dependence upon those to whom they minister. The Jews have always been great borrowers and imitators. It was quite natural that they should adopt the "price-current list" of the ancient Phœnicians, whose priests not only exacted the tribute of "first-fruits," but a fee in kind of each sacrifice. Then the judicial functions exercised by Jewish priests became a fruitful source of revenue, as the fines for certain offences were paid to the priests (2 Kings 12: 16; Hosea 4: 8; Amos 2: 8). According to 2 Sam. 8: 18 and 2 Bangs 10: 11, also 12: 2, the priests of the royal sanctuaries became the grandees of the realm, while the petty priests were generally poor enough—just as is well known to be the case among the Christian clergy of to-day, some receiving a salary of twenty-five thousand dollars and more per annum, while many of the "inferior clergy" hardly average two hundred and fifty dollars a year.

That the Christian clerical profession was borrowed from the Jews, just as the latter copied it from the heathen, is evident from the fact that Paul, while refusing for himself pecuniary support, preferring to "work with his own hands"
(36) (weaving tent-cloth), "living in his own hired house," nevertheless defended the principle of ministerial support, mainly on the ground of the Mosaic law (Deut. 25: 4), "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (1 Cor. 9: 9; 1 Tim. 5: 18). It is a striking illustration of the inconsistency of the modern clergy that they quote, in reference to a salaried ministry, the words ascribed to Jesus (Matt. 10: 10), "The workman is worthy of his meat," or, as it is rendered in Luke 10: 7, "The laborer is worthy of his hire," very conveniently forgetting to quote the connecting words requiring them to "provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in their purse, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," but to enter unceremoniously into any house, accepting any proffered hospitality, "eating such things as might be set before them." The fact is, the first disciples of Jesus, according to our Gospels, were mendicant monks,

leading lives of asceticism and poverty. There is no evidence that one of them ever received a salary; they made themselves entirely dependent on public charity and hospitality. The idea of a "church living" or "beneficed clergy" or a salaried ministry never entered into the mind of Him of whom it is said he "had not where to lay his head."

It is enough for the present argument to emphasize the point that, in the very nature of things, it is not reasonable to expect the whole truth from a salaried ministry. Those who have a large salary naturally desire to retain it; those who
(37) have small and insufficient salaries naturally desire to have them increased.

This can only be done by carefully preserving a good orthodox standing according to the sectarian *shibboleth*, and in pleasing the people who rent the pews or who dole out their penurious subscriptions for "the support of the gospel." High-salaried ministers are most likely to be proud, arrogant, bigoted, sectarian. Starveling ministers become broken in spirit, fawning, and crouching, and they generally have an unconscious expression of appeal for help, of importunity and expectancy, stamped upon their faces. The millstone of pecuniary dependence hangs so heavily about their necks that they seldom hold up their heads like men, and they can never utter a new truth or a startling sentiment without pausing to consider what effect it may have on the bread and butter of a dependent and generally numerous family. Ministers with high salaries are almost sure to be spoiled, and those with low ones are sure to be stultified and dwarfed intellectually and morally; so that we cannot depend upon either class for the highest and latest truths. Those who have a "living," provided in a State Church, and those who depend upon voluntary contributions from the people, are alike manacled and handicapped. We must look elsewhere than to the modern pulpit for that truth which alone can give freedom and true manliness. Perfect indifference as to ecclesiastical standing, backed by pecuniary independence, is an essential condition for untrammelled investigation and the fearless proclamation of the whole truth.

(38) It was noticed in the recent convention of scientists in this city (the American Association) that it was the salaried professors in Church colleges who professed to find no conflict between Geology and Genesis. It will always be so until the ecclesiastical tyranny is greatly weakened or destroyed, and men can utter their boldest thoughts without fear or favor, and when teachers can afford to have a conscience by making themselves free from Church control and menial dependence upon those to whom they minister for the necessaries of a mere livelihood. Science itself has made progress only as it has been fearless of priestly maledictions; and when it shall throw off the incubus of Church patronage it will astonish the world in showing the eternal antagonisms between the dogmas of the dominant theology and the essential truths of natural religion and morality.

CONCLUSIONS.

The following conclusions follow from what has been said:

(1) The clerical fraternity claims to be more than a mere profession. It is essentially a caste, a "holy order," borrowed from the ancient paganism, but somewhat modified by Judaism and a perverted Christianity.

(2) From such a caste or order the whole truth is not to be expected, especially when the truth would show the order to be an imposture. The assumptions of peculiar sanctity, official pre-eminence, functional prerogatives, and special spiritual authority make such a hope unnatural and quite impossible.

(39)

(3) The church system, with its tests of orthodoxy, its ecclesiastical handcuffs, and its worse than physical thumb-screws, puts an end to all independent thinking, and results in an enforced conformity inconsistent with intellectual progress and the discovery and full publication of the whole truth.

(4) The pecuniary stipend upon which professional preachers are dependent has a demoralizing and degrading influence, so that the doctrinal teaching of the pulpit should not be received without hesitation and distrust. The common law excludes the testimony of interested witnesses, and, though modern statutes admit such testimony, the courts take it for what it is worth, but always with many grains of allowance. "A gift perverteth judgment," and self-interest may sway the convictions of a man who intends and desires to be fairly honest.

(5) The existing systems of ministerial education and support deter many superior men from entering the profession, and have placed preaching upon a commercial or mercantile basis, which has manacled and crippled the pulpit, and must sooner or later result in the consideration of the question whether the services of the clergy are worth what they cost, and whether the truth must not be sought for in some other direction. More than two hundred and fifty thousand priests and ministers (of whom about one hundred thousand are in the United States) are maintained at an annual expense of more than five hundred millions of dollars; and, as a rule, where priests

(40) are most numerous, people are poorest and public morality lowest.

A member of the Canadian Parliament (Hon. James Beatty) has recently published a book in which he opposes the whole system of a salaried clergy on scriptural and other grounds; and many other thoughtful men are beginning to inquire how it is that the Society of Friends get along so well without a "hireling ministry."

(6) It is a great mistake to suppose that we must look mainly to professional clergymen for instruction in divine things. It is a significant fact that the most able and important books that have been published within the last decade have been written by laymen or by persons, like Emerson, who have outgrown the narrow garments of a caste profession and have laid them off. How to get along without professional ministers has been well answered by Capt. Robert C. Adams (quoted in the writer's book, Man—Whence and Whither? pp. 218, 219).

If ministers would give up the *holy-orders* idea, cast into the sea the millstone incumbrance of pecuniary dependence, engage earnestly in some legitimate work to support themselves, they would then for the first time begin to realize what soul-freedom is, and they could then preach with an intelligence and power and with a satisfaction to themselves of which they now know nothing. Let them try it for themselves and learn a lesson. Whether the clerical order is so divine an
(41) institution that we have no right to call it into question or to abolish it altogether, is a question that must be practically considered soon.

(7) There is a deep impression widely prevailing among thoughtful and sincerely religious persons that the infidelity of the pulpit is largely responsible for the prevailing skepticism of the age. The word "infidelity" is here specially used in a strict philological sense—*infidele*, not faithful, unfaithfulness to a trust—but it is also used in its more general sense of *disbelief* in certain religious dogmas.

We impeach and arraign the clergy (admitting a few honorable exceptions) on the general charge of *infidelity* in the strictest and broadest sense of the word—

1st. In that they fail to qualify themselves to be the leaders of thought in the great, living questions affecting religion and morality. We have elsewhere said: "Not one minister in a thousand 'discerns the signs of the times' or is prepared for the crisis. Few pastors ever read anything beyond their own denominational literature. Their education is partial, one-sided, professional. They cling to mediaeval superstitions with the desperate grasp of drowning men. The great majority of the clergy are not men of broad minds and wide and deep research, and have not the ability to meet the vexed questions of to-day."

It is an admitted policy, especially among the orthodox clergy (so called),
(42) not to read or to listen to anything that might unsettle their faith in what they have accepted as a finality; whereas no man can intelligently *believe* anything until he has candidly considered the reasons assigned by other men for not believing what he does. "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him."

Professor Fisher, the champion of Yale-College orthodoxy, has recently admitted in the *North American Review* that at least one of the causes of the decline of clerical authority and influence is the increased intelligence of the laity. If the people cannot get what they desire from the pulpit, they will seek it from the platform and the press. Truth is no longer to be concealed in cloisters and smothered in theological seminaries, but it is to be proclaimed from housetops and in language understood in every-day life.

It was once said that "the lips of the priest give knowledge," but it may now be truly said that modern scientists and philosophers among the laity are the principal teachers of mankind, and that publications like the *North American Review* and *The Forum*, and last, but not least, the secular daily newspapers, are doing more to instruct the people in living truths than the whole brood of ecclesiastical parrots.

2d. We charge that many professional clergymen suppress things which they do believe to be true, and not unfrequently suggest things, at least by implication, which they do know to be false.

Dr. Edward Everett Hale recently published an article in the *North Amer-*
(43) *ican Review* entitled "Insincerity in the Pulpit;" and the Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks of Boston, who recently received episcopal honors in Massachussetts, has confirmed in the *Princeton Review* what Dr. Hale charged in the *North American Review* regarding clerical disingenuousness. Dr. Brooks wrote thus:

"A large acquaintance with clerical life has led me to think that almost any company of clergymen, talking freely to each other, will express opinions which would greatly surprise, and at the same time greatly relieve, the congregations who ordinarily listen to these ministers.... How many men in the ministry to-day believe in the doctrine of verbal inspiration which our fathers held? and how many of us have frankly told the people that we do not believe it?... How many of us hold that the everlasting punishment of the wicked is a clear and certain truth of revelation? But how many of us who do not have ever said a word?"

The same principle of prevarication and deceit was practised by the early Fathers of the Christian Church, who not only concealed the truth from the masses of the people, but did not hesitate to deceive and mislead them.

Mosheim, an ecclesiastical historian of high authority, testifies that "in the fourth century it was an almost universally adopted maxim that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie when by such means the interests of the Church might be promoted." He further says of the fifth century, "Fraud and impudent imposture
(44) were artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar."

Milman, in his *History of Christianity*, says: "It was admitted and avowed that to deceive into Christianity was so valuable a service as to hallow deceit itself." He further says in the same historical work, "That some of the Christian

legends were deliberate forgeries can scarcely be questioned." There is not a Bible manuscript or version that has not been manipulated by ecclesiastics for century after century. Many of these priests were both ignorant and vicious. From the fifth to the fifteenth century crimes not fit to be mentioned prevailed among the clergy.

Dr. Lardner says that Christians of all sorts were guilty of fraud, and quotes Cassaubon as saying, "In the earliest times of the Church it was considered a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truth the help of their own inventions." Dr. Thomas Burnet, in a Latin treatise intended for the clergy only, said, "Too much light is hurtful to weak eyes;" and he recommended the practice of deceiving the common people for their own good. I *know* that this same policy is in vogue in our day. This same nefarious doctrine of the exoteric and esoteric, one thing for the priest and another for the people, is far from being dead in this nineteenth century. It has always been, and now is, the real priestly policy to keep the common people in ignorance of many things; and if all do not accept the maxim of Gregory, that "Ignorance is the mother of Devotion," many ministers *privately* hold in our day that "where ignorance is bliss 'Tis folly to be wise."

(45) 3d. The third article of impeachment, under the general charge of infidelity is, that sacerdotalists teach dogmas which they do not believe themselves. They do not all believe, *ex animo*, the distinctive dogmas of the orthodox creeds—that God is angry with the great body of mankind, that his wrath is a burning flame, and that there is, as to a majority of men, but a moment's time and a point of space between them and eternal torture more terrible than imagination can conceive or language describe. It is well said that "Actions speak louder than words;" and we need only ask the question, "Do ministers who profess to believe these horrible dogmas preach as if they really believed them?" Notice the general deportment of the clergy at the summer resort, at the seaside, or on the mountain-top, and say whether they can possibly believe what for eight or nine months they have been preaching in their now closed churches. Listen to the private conversation of our evangelists at the camp-meeting or at the meetings of ecclesiastical bodies, and then conclude, if you can, that they believe what they teach.

Take, if you please, the case of one of our best-known evangelical ministers, a member of the strictest of our orthodox sects, who spends a large proportion of his time in studying the ways of insects, and who would chase a pismire across the continent to find out its habits. Can a pastor believe in his heart the dogmas of the Westminster Confession, and yet devote so much time to ants? It is impossible. He may deceive himself; he cannot deceive others.

(46) 4th. Our fourth article of impeachment under the general charge is, that the pulpit is the great promoter of skepticism called infidelity, in that it insists upon the belief of dogmas which are absurd upon their face, such as the miraculous

conception of Jesus, the dogma of the Trinity, the origin and fall of man, vicarious atonement, predestination, election and reprobation, eternal torture for the majority, and many other absurdities which no rational mind can now consistently accept.

True, these dogmas may be found in the Bible; and when men ate told with weekly reiterations that the Bible is purely divine, supernatural, and infallible, and they find that it is purely human, natural, and very fallible, they cannot believe the Bible, though they find many inspiring and helpful things in it. When ministers tell thinking men that they must believe all or reject all, they accept the foolish alternative and reject all. And so it might be further shown how, in very many ways, the pulpit is the great promoter of skepticism and infidelity, and that the professed teachers of religion are its greatest enemies, its most effective clogs and successful antagonists. No wonder that the most thoughtful and intelligent men and women in every community have drifted away from the popular faith, and are anxiously inquiring, What next?

President Thomas Jefferson, in writing to Timothy Pickering, well said:

"The religion-builders have so distorted and deformed the doctrines of Jesus,
(47) so muffled them in mysticisms, fancies and falsehoods, have caricatured them into forms so monstrous and inconceivable, as to shock reasonable thinkers to revolt them against the whole, and drive them rashly to pronounce its founder an impostor." Writing to Dr. Cooper, he said: "*My opinion is that there would never have been an infidel if there had never been a priest.*"

We would not abolish the office, or, if you please, the profession, of *public moral teacher*, but we would banish from the world the caste idea, the *holy-order* pretence. When simple-minded young men and grave and surpliced bishops talk about taking "holy orders," sensible and thoughtful men know that they are talking holy nonsense. No man has a right to assume that he is more holy than other men, or that he has authority to exercise religious functions that other men have not.

Nor have we any objection that moral teachers should be paid for their services as other teachers are paid; but when educated men can afford to teach without pecuniary compensation, we think it would be well for them to do so; and when the teacher of morals adopts the example of St. Paul, "working with his own hands" and "living in his own hired house," we think the world will be the better for it. Let us hope that the day will soon dawn when clergymen will consider themselves moral teachers only, and for ever repudiate the false pretence of special authority and priestly sanctimoniousness, and clearly understand that mediocrity and stupidity will not much longer be tolerated because of the so-
(48) called sacredness of a profession.

That the estimate here made of sacerdotalists may not seem extreme and unjustifiable, I add the testimony of one of the most honored ecclesiastics of the Es-

tablished Church of England, Canon Farrar, who in a recent sermon on priestcraft said: "In all ages the exclusive predominance of priests has meant the indifference of the majority and the subjection of the few. It has meant the slavery of men who will not act, and the indolence of men who will not think, and the timidity of men who will not resist, and the indifference of men who do not care." Alas that "holy hands" should so often be laid "upon skulls that cannot teach and will not learn"!

Let me here quote from Professor Huxley an admirable statement of the facts in the case:

"Everywhere have they (sacerdotalists) broken the spirit of wisdom and tried to stop human progress by quotations from their Bibles or books of their saints. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonize impossibilities; whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled
(49) by the outcry of the same strong party? It is true that if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologies lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed if not annihilated, scotched if not slain. But orthodoxy learns not, neither can it forget; and though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and the end of sound science, and to visit with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralyzed hands can hurl those who refuse to degrade nature to the level of primitive Judaism." "Religion," he also elsewhere writes, "arising like all other knowledge out of the action and interaction of man's mind, has taken the intellectual coverings of Fetishism, Polytheism, of Theism or Atheism, of Superstition or Rationalism; and if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past; not because it has renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but it begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs, and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions by worship, 'for the most part of the silent sort,' at the altar of the *unknown and unknowable*"... "If
(50) a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I know not, that neither I nor any one else have any means of knowing, and that under these circumstances I decline to trouble myself about the subject at

all, I do not think he has any right to call me a skeptic." Again: "What are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people? They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief; that merit attaches to a readiness to believe; that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and skepticism a sin; and there are many excellent persons who still hold by these principles."... "Yet we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith nor that of our morals which keeps the plague from our city; but it is the improvement of our natural knowledge. We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, un watered streets full of accumulated garbage; their houses must be ill-drained, ill-ventilated; their subjects must be ill-lighted, ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed; the London of 1665 was such a city; the cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities; we in later times have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge, and that of fractional obedience, we have no plague; but because that knowledge is very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhus is our companion and cholera our visitor."

CHAPTER III. THE FABULOUS CLAIMS OF JUDAISM

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        "Not giving heed to Jewish fables."—Tit. 1: 14.

      "Neither give heed to fables."—1 Tim. 1: 4.

      "But refuse profane and old wives' fables."—1 Tim. 4: 7.
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IT is impossible to understand modern Christian ecclesiasticism without a careful study of ancient Judaism. It is reported that Jesus himself said, "*Salvation is of the Jews.*" The gospel was to be preached "to the Jews first." The common belief to-day is, that the Christian Church represents the substance of what Judaism was the promise, and that the New Testament contains the fulfilment and realization of what was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

All well-informed theologians understand that the Christian Church is held to have had its origin in what is denominated the "call of Abraham," and that what is known in orthodox parlance as the "Abrahamic covenant" lies at the foundation of the orthodox theory of grace and of all other systems of doctrine falsely designated as evangelical. It is a suggestive fact that while Christians hold that their religion is the very quintessence and outcome of Judaism, they most cordially hate the Jews, and the Jews in return, have a supreme contempt for Christians
(52) and stoutly deny the relationship of parent and child.

Now that the descent of the Jews from the Chaldean Abram, whom they affect to call their father, is discredited by all scholars who reject the inspirational and infallible theory of the Old Testament, it is very difficult to find out the real origin of this strange people. All modern writers on Jews and Judaism admit that outside of the Old Testament there is little or no history of the Jews down to the time of Alexander, and that there is very little reliable history even in the collection of books known as the Hebrew Scriptures. It cannot be doubted now that the Pentateuch, improperly called the five books of Moses, was mostly written after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, about 538 b. c., and what is found in these books mainly corresponds with the religion and literature of the Assyrians, and was learned during their sojourn in that country, and not, as has ignorantly been supposed, from the mythical Abram, the reputed immigrant from Ur of the Chaldees. What is recorded in the Pentateuch, not being mentioned in other Old-Testament writings, shows that such records had no existence when those books were written, and therefore could have no recognition. It will be shown hereafter that there is little or nothing in the Pentateuch that is strictly original, much less strictly historical. Indeed, the tales of the Old Testament generally were written for a religious or patriotic purpose, with little regard for time, place, or historical accuracy. Persons, real or mythical, are often used to repre-
(63) sent different tribes, while allegory is the rule rather than the exception in what is ignorantly accepted as history. This is admitted by many eminent Christian writers.

The word "Jew" first occurs in 2 Kings 16: 6 to denote the inhabitants of Judea, but they should properly have been called "Judeans." The very name *Jew* is probably mythological, derived from *Jeoud*, the name of the only son of Saturn, though, like Abraham, he had several other sons. It cannot be doubted that the

stories of Saturn and Abraham are slightly varied versions of the same fable.

The Jews never deserved to be called a *nation*, at least not until in comparatively modern times. They were inclined from the first to mingle with and intermarry with other peoples, and so became *mongrels* at an early period.

There was no race distinction, we are told, between the Canaanites, Idumeans, and Israelites. Ishmael married an Egyptian woman, and so did Joseph, the son of Jacob. Esau married a daughter of Ishmael, also two other women, called daughters of Canaan, one a Hittite and the other a Hivite. Judah and Simeon each married Canaanites. We read in Judges 3: 5, 6, "The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their [own] daughters to their sons, and served their gods."

In Ezekiel 16th it is written: "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, Thy birth and thy nativity was in the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite and
(54) thy mother an Hittite. Your mother was an Hittite and your father an Amorite—thine elder sister, Samaria, and thy youngest sister, Sodom."

In Deut. 7: 7 the Jews are told, "The Lord did not set his love upon you because ye were more in number than any other people, for ye were *fewest* of all people." In Josh. 12: 24 they are reminded that it was necessary to "send them hornets which drove them (the Canaanites) out before you, even the two kings of the Amorites;" and in Ex. 23: 28, 29 it is said, "I will send hornets before thee which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field multiply against thee." This does not look as if the Jews were very numerous or valorous in the little territory not much larger than the State of Connecticut.

Josephus makes certain notes to show that the Lacedemonians claimed original kinship with the Jews, and some writers make the same claim for the Afghans and several other peoples. Nothing is more certain, in my judgment, than that the Jews are the most thoroughly *mongrel* race upon the face of the earth. That they have certain idiosyncrasies in common, and even certain distinguishing *facial* and other physical marks, can easily be accounted for on other grounds than the assumption of unity of race.

The common story of the origin of the Jews is certainly fabulous. Major-
(55) General Forlong, of the British Army, says: "They were probably in the beginning a wandering tribe of Bedouin Arabs who got possession of the rocky parts of Palestine, which were never made better by their presence. They are a comparatively modern people. The first notice of Jews is possibly that of certain Shemitic rulers in the Aram paying tribute about 850 b. c. to Vul-Nirari, the successor of Shalmaneser of Syria; regarding which, however, much more is made by biblicists

than the simple record warrants. This is the case also where Champollion affirms that mention is made on the Theban temples of the capture of certain towns of the land we call Judæa, this being thought to prove the existence of Jews. Similar assumption takes place in regard to the hieratic papyri of the Leyden Museum, held to belong to the time of Rameses II., an inscription read on the rocks of El-Hamamat, and the discovery of some names like Chedorlaomer in the records of Babylonia; but this is all the (so-called) evidence as to the existence of ancient Jews which has been advanced; and the most is made of it in Dr. Birch's opening address on the *Progress of Biblical Archaeology* at the inauguration of the Archaeological Society. Of Jews we hear nothing during all the Thothmik wars, unless they be included among the phallic-worshipping Hermonites who were mentioned as inhabiting the highlands of Syria. We have no real historical evidence of the persons or kingdoms of David or Solomon, though we may grant the Jewish stories
(56) *cum grano salis*, seeing how outrageously they have always exaggerated in everything pertaining to their own glorification.

"The only logical conclusion justifiable when we give up the inspiration theory is, that Arabs and Syro-Phœnicians were known to Assyrians and Egyptians, and this none would deny. Indeed, we readily grant, with Dr. Birch, that under the nineteenth and twentieth Egyptian dynasties the influence of the Aramæan nations is distinctly marked; that not only by blood and alliances had the Pharaohs been closely united with the princes of Palestine and Syria, but that the language of the period abounds in Semitic words quite different from the Egyptian, with which they were embroidered and intermingled. Could it possibly be otherwise? Is it not so to this day? Is a vast and rapidly-spawning Shemitic continent like Arabia not to influence the narrow delta of a river adjoining it or the wild highlands of Syria to the north? Of course Arabs or Shemites were everywhere spread over Egypt, Syria, and Phœnicia, as well as in their ancient seats of empire in Arabia, Irak (Kaldia), and on the imperial mounds of Kalneh and Koyunjik; but not necessarily as Jews. I cannot find that these last were anything more than a peculiar religious sect of Arabs who settled down from their pristine nomadic habits and obtained a *quasi* government under petty princes or sheiks, such as we have seen take place in the case of numerous Arabian and Indian sects.

"Only about two hundred years or so after their return from Babylon did
(57) the Jews seem to consolidate into a nation, and the collection and translation of their old mythic records—deciphered with much difficulty by the diligent librarians of Ptolemy Philadelphus from "old shreds and scraps of leather"—no doubt materially aided in consolidating the people and in welding them into what they became—clans proud of a sort of a mythic history built up by Ezra and other men acquainted with Babylonian records and popular cosmogonies."

No efforts, say the leaders of the Biblical Archaeological Society, have been able to find either amidst the numerous engravings on the rocks of Arabia Petrea or Palestine, *any save Phœnician inscriptions*; not even a record of the Syro-Hebrew character, which was once thought to be the peculiar property of Hebrews. Most of those inscriptions hitherto discovered do not date anterior to the Roman empire. Few, if *any* monuments (of Jews) have been found in Palestine or the neighboring countries of any useful antiquity save the Moabite Stone, and the value of this last is all in favor of my previous arguments on these points. At the pool of Siloam we have an "inscription in the Phœnician character as old as the time of the Kings;... it is incised upon the walls of a rock-chamber apparently dedicated to Baal, who is mentioned on it. So that here, in a most holy place of this peculiar people, we find only Phœnicians, and these worshipping the Sun-god of Fertility, as was customary on every coast of Europe from unknown times down to the rise
(58) of Christianity."

The Biblical Archaeological Society and British Museum authorities tell us frankly and clearly that no Hebrew square character can be proved to exist till after the Babylonian captivity, and that, at all events, this inscription of Siloam shows "that the curved or Phœnician character was in use in Jerusalem itself under the Hebrew monarchy, as well as the conterminous Phœnicia, Moabitis, and the more distant Assyria. No monument, indeed," continues Dr. Birch, "of greater antiquity inscribed in the square character (Hebrew) has been found as yet *older than the fifth century A. D.* [the small capitals are mine], and the coins of the Maccabean princes, as well as those of the revolter Barcochab, are impressed with *Samaritan* characters. So that here we have the most complete confirmation of all that I assert as to the mythical history of a Judean people prior to a century or so b. c., and even then only under such a government as Babylonian administrators had taught them to form and the lax rule of the Seleukidæ, followed by intermittent Roman government, permitted of."

Another modern writer says: "Soon after the death of Alexander the Jews first came into notice under Ptolemy I. of Egypt, and some of their books were collected at the new-built city of Alexandria."

Such was the insignificance of the Jews as a people that the historical monuments preceding the time of Alexander the Great, who died 323 years b. c., make not the slightest mention of any Jewish transaction. The writings of Thales, Solon,
(59) Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Herodotus, and Xenophon, all of whom visited remote countries, contain no mention of the Jews whatever. Neither Homer nor Aristotle, the preceptor of Alexander, makes any mention of them. The story of Josephus, that Alexander visited Jerusalem, has been proved to be a fabrication. Alexander's historians say nothing about it. He did pass through the coast of Palestine, and the only resistance he encountered was at Gaza, which was gar-

risoned by Persians (Wyttenbach's *Opuscula*, vol. ii. pp. 416, 421).

For half a century after its destruction, says Dr. Robinson, there is no mention of Jerusalem in history; and even until the time of Constantine its history presents little more than a blank (vol. i. pp. 367, 371).

General Forlong says: "The area of Judea and Samaria is, according to the above authority, 140 X 40 = 5600 square miles, which I think is certainly one-fourth too much, my own triangulation of it giving only 4500, or a figure of about 130 X 35. I will, however, concede the allotment of 5600, but we must remember that, as a rule, the whole is a dismal, rocky, arid region, with only intersecting valleys, watered by springs and heavy rain from November to February inclusive, and having scorching heats from April to September. Even the inhabitable portions of the country could only support the very sparsest population, and I speak after having marched over it and also a considerable portion of the rest of the world. In India we should look upon it as a very poor province; in some respects very like
(60) the hilly tracts of Mewar or Odeypoor in Kajpootana, but in extent, population, and wealth it is less than that small principality.

"The chief importance of Palestine in ancient history was due to its lying on the high-road between the great kingdoms of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, and as giving the Arabs a hiding- and abiding-place which they—Jews included—could not obtain if they ventured out on the plains south and east. The holes and fastnesses of the hills were their safeguards, and, as they assure us, very much used indeed. The Jewish strip is divided into Samaria as a centre, with Galilee north and Judea south, giving to the two former eight-tenths, and the latter two-tenths; that is, two tribes; 5600 X 2/10 so that the Judean area would be about 5600 X 8/10 = 20 square miles, against the 4480 of the latter; and the population would be somewhat in this proportion, for the extreme barrenness of all the country south and east of Jerusalem would be in some degree made up for by this town being perhaps a little larger than those in the north.

"We are thus prepared to state the population of the entire land in terms of its area, as was done for the Judean capital, and with equally startling results. The whole Turkish empire yields at present less than twenty-four persons to the square mile, and in the wild and warring ages we are here concerned with we may safely say that there were less than twenty per square mile, of which half were
(61) females and one-third of the other half children and feeble persons, unable to take the field whether for war or agriculture. The result is disastrous to much biblical matter, and far-reaching; upsetting the mighty armies of Joshua and the Judges, no less than those of David and Solomon, who are thought for a few short years to have united the tribes: nay, the stern facts of figures destroy all the subsequently divided kings or petty chiefs who lasted down to the sixth century or so b. c., and show us that Jews have ever been insignificant in the extreme, especially when

compared with the great peoples who generally ruled them, and far and wide around them.

"So that this paltry thirty thousand to forty thousand is the very most which the twelve tribes could, and only for these few years, bring to the front. In general, the tribes warred with one another and with their neighbors, so that, for the purposes of foreign war, the Jewish race represented only two or three tribes at a time, or, say, ten thousand able men. Thus one tribe—as, for example, Ju-
(62) dah—would have only from three thousand to four thousand men in all, supposing every man left his fields and home to fight, while Assyrian armies not unusually numbered one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand men."

In the above statistics also we have taken a greater area than I think the tribes occupied. There is not a sign of a Jewish people till about what is called their "Eastern Captivity," and the Rev. Mr. Rodwell writes in the *Trans. of the Biblical Archaeological Society* that "*the Hebrew of the Bible is no other than a dialectic variety of the Canaanitish or Phœnician tongue expressed in the Chaldean character*, not brought, as has been taught, by Abram himself from Ur of the Chaldees, but adopted by the Israelites during their long captivities." "Could it possibly be otherwise when we look at the facts? The Jews were a poor, ignorant, weak Arab tribe, living on the outskirts of a land occupied for long ages previously by the most famous race of all antiquity—a people from whom Greece, Rome, and Carthage alike borrowed the ideas of their earliest art and architecture. Homer called this race *Phens* Poludaidaloi—'artists of varied skill,' and later Romans prized them above all others for their constructive talent. Pliny, Seneca, and Varro praise them in words which will never die; Jews said that David solicited their skilled labor, and that Solomon's temple, small and simple though it was, could not be raised without their help; nay, though Ezra says he had these ensamples before him, and had seen all the fine buildings of Babylon, yet he too had to solicit their
(63) aid, else the walls of the city of Jehovah and Zerub-babel's second shrine could never have been constructed. In all arts, trades, and manufactures this extraordinary people excelled every ancient race, and from the very earliest times down and into the Roman period. Is it surprising, then, that their language and customs prevailed wherever their skilled aid was required? that Africa in its writing was no less Punic—that is, Phœnician—than Libyan, guided by these wondrous Pheni or "Tyrii bilingues"? The history of Britain during some past generations as the first great manufacturing country of modern times shows how civilization, power, and progress must ever follow industry and usefulness, and Phœnicians to a great extent in early days controlled 'the sinews of war' where this was their interest; but it too often proved more profitable to deal in swords and helmets than in 'Tyrian purple' and costly brocade stuffs. Manufacturers are not much given to writing, and these Pheni have been so parsimonious in their vowels and

lavish and indifferent in the use of b's, dfs, r's, and s's that few philological students have attempted the translation of Phœnician writings, though Phœnician, and not Hebrew, is what alone we find traces of in Syria and Palestine."

It has been substantially said by William Henry Burr, in a work not now in the market, that "very erroneous ideas prevail in regard to the magnitude of the nation and country of the Jews and their importance in history. Most maps of ancient Palestine assign far too much territory to that nation. They make the
(64) greatest length of the country from 160 to 175 miles, and its greatest breadth from 70 to 90, inclosing an area of from 10,000 to 12,000 square miles—a little larger than the State of Vermont. They not only include the entire Mediterranean coast for 160 miles, but a considerable mountain-tract on the north, above Dan, and a portion of the desert on the south, below Beer-sheba, besides running the eastern boundary out too far. Moreover, they lengthen the distances in every direction. From Dan to Beersheba, the extreme northern and southern towns, the distance on Mitchell's map is 165 miles, and on Colton's, 150; but on a map accompanying *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, by Edward Robinson, D. D., which is one of the most recent and elaborate, and will doubtless be accepted as the best authority, the distance is only 128 miles.

"Now, the Israelites were never able to drive out the Canaanites from the choicest portion of the country—the Mediterranean coast—nor even from most parts of the interior (Judges 1: 16-31; 1 Kings 9: 20, 21). The Phœnicians, a powerful maritime people, occupied the northern portion of the coast, and the Philistines the southern; between these the Jebusites or some other people held control, so that the Israelites were excluded from any part of the Mediterranean shore. The map of their country must therefore undergo a reduction of a strip on the west at least 10 miles wide by 160 long, or 1600 square miles. A further reduction must be made of about 400 square miles for the Dead Sea and Lake of Tiberias. This leaves
(65) at most 9000 square miles by Colton's map. But on this map the extreme length of the country is 175 miles, which is 47 miles too great: for the whole dominion of the Jews extended only from Dan to Beersheba, which Dr. Robinson places only 128 miles apart. We must therefore make a further reduction of an area about 47 by 60 miles, or 2800 square miles. Then we must take off a slice on the east, at least 10 miles broad by 60 long, or 600 square miles. Thus we reduce the area of Colton's map from 11,000 square miles to 5600—a little less than the State of Connecticut.

"But now, if we subtract from this what was wilderness and desert, and also what was at no time inhabited and controlled by the Israelites, we further reduce their habitable territory about one-half. The land of Canaan being nearly all mountainous and bounded on the south and east by a vast desert which encroached upon the borders of the country, a great part of it was barren wilderness. Nor did but one-fifth of the Israelites (two and a half tribes) occupy the country

east of the Jordan, which was almost equal in extent to that on the west, the proper Land of Promise. The eastern half, therefore, must have been but thinly populated by the two and a half tribes, who were only able to maintain a precarious foothold against the bordering enemies. So, then, it is not probable that the Israelites actually inhabited and governed at any time à territory of more than 3000 square miles, or not much if any larger than the little State of Delaware. At all events,
(66) it can hardly be doubted that Delaware contains more good land than the whole country of the Jews ever did.

"The promise to Abraham in Gen. 15: 18 is 'from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.' But the Jewish possessions never reached the Nile by 200 miles. In Ex. 33: 31 the promise is renewed, but the river of Egypt is not named. The boundaries are 'from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines (the Mediterranean), and from the desert to the river.' By 'the river' was doubtless meant the Euphrates; and assuming that by 'the desert' was meant the eastern boundary (though Canaan was bounded on the south also by the same great desert which reached to the Red Sea), we have in this promise a territory 600 miles long by an average of about 180 broad, making an area of about 100,000 square miles, or ten times as much as the Jews ever could claim, and nearly one-half of it uninhabitable. So, then, the promise was never fulfilled, for the Israelites were confined to a very small central portion of their land of promise, and whether they occupied 3000 or 12,000 square miles in the period of their greatest power, the fact is not to be disputed that their country was a very small one.

"Lamartine describes the journey from Bethany to Jericho as singularly toilsome and melancholy—neither houses nor cultivation, mountains without a shrub, immense rocks split by time, pinnacles tinged with colors like those of an extinct volcano. 'From the summit of these hills, as far as the eye can reach, we see
(67) only black chains, conical or broken peaks, a boundless labyrinth of passes rent through the mountains, and those ravines lying in perfect and perpetual stillness, without a stream, without a wild animal, without even a flower, the relics of a convulsed land, with waves of stone' (vol. ii., p. 146)."

But lest it may be thought that these dismal features are due to modern degeneracy, let us take the testimony of an early Christian Father, St. Jerome, who lived a long time in Bethlehem, four miles south of Jerusalem. In the year 414 he wrote to Dardanus thus: "I beg of those who assert that the Jewish people after coming out of Egypt took possession of this country (which to us, by the passion and resurrection of our Saviour, has become truly the land of promise), to show us what this people possessed. Their whole dominions extended only from Dan to Beersheba, hardly 160 Roman miles in length (147 geographical miles). The Scriptures give no more to David and Solomon, except what they acquired by alliance after conquest.... I am ashamed to say what is the breadth of the land of

promise, lest I should thereby give the pagans occasion to blaspheme. It is but 47 miles (42 geographical miles) from Joppa to our little town of Bethlehem, beyond which all is a frightful desert" (vol. ii., p. 605).

Elsewhere he describes the country as the "refuse and rubbish of nature." He says that "from Jerusalem to Bethlehem there is nothing but stones, and in the
(68) summer the inhabitants can scarcely get water to drink."

"In the year 1847, Lieut. Lynch of the U. S. Navy was sent to explore the river Jordan and the Dead Sea. He and his party with great difficulty crossed the country from Acre to the Lake of Tiberias, with trucks drawn by camels. The only roads from time immemorial were mule-paths. Frequent détours had to be made, and they were compelled actually to make some portions of their road. Even then the last declivity could not be overcome until all hands turned out and hauled the boats and baggage down the steep places; and many times it seemed as if, like the ancient herd of swine, they would all rush precipitately into the sea. Over three days were required to make the journey, which in a straight line would be only twenty-seven miles. For the first few miles they passed over a pretty fertile plain, but this was the ancient Phœnician country, which the Jews never conquered. The rest of the route was mountainous and rocky, with not a tree visible nor a house outside the little walled villages (pp. 135 to 152).

"The ancient Sea of Galilee has a prominent place in Jewish geography and commerce, yet on this insignificant body of water, twelve miles long by seven wide, all the commerce of the Jews was carried on, except when they had the use of a port on the Red Sea.

"In a book entitled *The Holy Land, Syria*, etc., by David Roberts, R. A. (London, 1855), the valley of the Jordan is thus described:

(69) "'A large portion of the valley of the Jordan has been from the earliest time almost a desert. But in the northern part the great number of rivulets which descend from the mountains on both sides produce in many places a luxuriant growth of wild herbage. So too in the southern part, where similar rivulets exist, as around Jericho, there is even an exuberant fertility; but those rivulets seldom reach the Jordan and have no effect on the middle of the Ghor. The mountains on each side are rugged and desolate, the western cliffs overhanging the valley at an elevation of 1000 or 1200 feet, while the eastern mountains fall back in ranges of from 2000 to 2500 feet.'"

What was the size of ancient Jerusalem? We know pretty nearly what it is now and how many inhabitants it contains. It is three-quarters of a mile long by
(11) half a mile wide, and its population is not more than ,500 (*Biblical Researches*, vol i., p. 421), a large proportion of whom are drawn thither by the renowned sanctity of the place. Dr. Robinson measured the wall of the city, and found it to be only 12,978 feet in circumference, or nearly two and a half miles (vol. i., p. 268).

"In a book entitled *An Essay on the Ancient Topography of Jerusalem*, by James Fergusson (London, 1847), a diagram is given of the walls of ancient and modern Jerusalem, from which it appears that the greatest length of the city was at no time more than 6000 feet, or a little more than a mile, and its greatest width about three-quarters of a mile; while the real Jerusalem of old was but a little more than
(70) a quarter that size.

"With these measurements Mr. Fergusson undertakes to estimate the probable population of the ancient city, as follows:

"'If we allow the inhabitants of the first-named cities fifty yards to each individual, and that one-half of the new city was inhabited at the rate of one person to each one hundred yards, this will give a permanent population of 23,000 souls. If, on the other hand, we allow only thirty-three yards to each of the old cities, and admit that the whole of the new was as densely populated as London, or allowing one hundred yards to each inhabitant, we obtain 37,000 souls for the whole; which I do not think it at all probable that Jerusalem ever could have contained as a permanent population.' "'In another part of the book (p. 47) he says:

"If we were to trust Josephus, he would have us believe that Jerusalem contained at one time, or could contain, two and a half or three millions of souls, and that at the siege of Titus 1,100,000 perished by famine and the sword, 97,000 were taken captive, and 40,000 allowed by Titus to go free.

"In order to show the gross exaggeration of these numbers, he cites the fact that the army of Titus did not exceed, altogether, 30,000, and that Josephus himself enumerates the fighting-men of the city at 23,400, which would give a population something under 100,000. But even this he believes to be an exaggeration. For, says he,

"'In all the sallies it cannot be discovered that at any time the Jews could bring into the field 10,000 men, if so many.... Titus enclosed the city with a line four and a half miles in extent, which, with his small army, was so weak a disposition that a small body of the Jews could easily have broken through it; but they never seem to have had numbers sufficient to be able to attempt it.'

"The author guesses that the Jews might have mustered at the beginning of the siege about 10,000 men, and that the city might have contained altogether about 40,000 inhabitants, permanent and transient, in a space which in no other city in the world could accommodate 30,000 souls. But the wall of Agrippa was built, as the same author states, twelve or thirteen years after the Crucifixion; hence prior to that time the area of Jerusalem was only 756,000 yards, and it was capable of containing only 23,000 inhabitants at most, but probably never did contain more than 15,000.

"Allowing to Jerusalem, in the period of the greatest prosperity of the Jews, a population of even 20,000, is it at all probable that the whole country could have

contained anything like even the lowest estimate to be gathered from the Scripture record? In 1 Chron. 21: 5, 6 we read that the number of 'men that drew the (72) sword of Israel and Judah amounted to 1,570,000, not counting the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. In 2 Sam. 24: 9, the number given at the same census is 1,300,000, and no omission is mentioned. Assuming the larger number to be correct, and adding only one-eighth for the two tribes of Levi and Benjamin, which may have been the smallest, we have 1,766,000 fighting-men. This would give, at the rate of one fighting-man to four inhabitants, a total population of over 7,000,000 souls. But if we adopt a more reasonable ratio, of one to six, we have a population of over 10,500,000 souls. And then we omit the aliens. These numbered 153,600 workingmen only two years later (2 Chron. 2: 17), and the total alien population, therefore, must have been about 500,000, which, added to the census, would make the total population from 7,500,000 to 11,000,000, or more. Can any intelligent man believe that a mountainous, barren country, no larger than Connecticut, without commerce, without manufactures, without the mechanical arts, without civilization, ever did or could subsist even two millions of people? Much less can it be believed that it subsisted 'seven nations greater and mightier than the Israelitish nation itself' (Deut. 7: 1)—i e. not less than 14,000,000.

"That the Jews were a very barbarous people is undeniable. Slavery necessarily makes a people barbarous. Not only were the Israelites a nation of slaves, according to their own record, but after their entry into Canaan they were six times reduced to bondage in their own land of promise. During a period of 281 years they were in slavery 111 years.

"That the Jews were far behind their surrounding neighbors in civilization is shown by the fact that in the first battle they fought under their first king, Saul, they had in the whole army 'neither sword nor spear in the hand of any of the people,' except Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. 13:22). Nor was any 'smith found throughout all the land of Israel' (ver. 19), but 'all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock' (ver. 20.) This was 404 years after the Exodus and only 75 years prior to the building of Solomon's temple. Their weapons of war were those of the rudest savage.

"As another evidence of the barbarism of the Jews, when David resolved to build a house for himself he had no native artisans, but had to send to Hiram, king of Tyre, for masons and carpenters (2 Sam. 5: 11). Even the wood itself had to be brought from Tyre, it would seem that even in those days, as now, the mountains of Canaan were destitute of trees—a sure sign of a sterile country. The (74) wood of course had to be carried overland. Wheel-carriages were unknown to the Israelites, except in the form of chariots of iron used by their enemies, which prevented Judah, even with the help of the Lord, from driving out the inhabitants of

the valleys (Judg. 1: 19). David captured 1000 chariots in about the sixteenth year of his reign, of which he preserved only 100, disabling all the horses (1 Ghron. 18: 3.) Prior to this event neither chariots nor horses had been used by the Israelites, nor was much use made of them by the subsequent kings. Oxen and asses were their beasts of burden; camels were rare even long after Solomon's reign. How, then, was the wood brought from Tyre over the mountains, unless it was carried on the backs of oxen or asses or dragged along the ground?"

That a considerable number of Jews at one time sojourned in Egypt is highly probable. How they got there, and how they came to leave, is not so certain. An eminent Egyptologist writes in a leading London journal:

"The presence of large numbers of Semites in ancient Egypt has always been a puzzle to historians, and what first led to their migrating from Mesopotamia to the land of the Pharaohs has never hitherto been made clear. Quite recently, however, the British Museum has become possessed of a number of cuneiform tablets which throw considerable light on the subject. Early in the present year a number of these tablets were offered for sale in Cairo. They had been dug up from the grave of a royal scribe of Amenophis III. and IV. of the eighteenth dynasty,
(75) which had given up its records, and not only records, but seals and papyri of great historical and artistic value. Some went to the Boulak Museum, some to Berlin, others to private persons, and eighty-one have found their way to the British Museum. These last have now been arranged and catalogued by Mr. Budge, the well-known Egyptologist, whose investigations have brought to light a most interesting chapter in the history of ancient Egypt. Not only do the tablets explain the historical crux mentioned above, but they introduce us to the family life of the early kings. They picture to us the splendors of the royal palaces; they enable us to assist at the betrothal of the kings' daughters and to follow the kings to their hunting-grounds. Most of the tablets are letters addressed to Amenophis III., and some are from Tushratta, king of Mesopotamia.

"Amenophis III. was a mighty hunter, and once on a shooting-trip into Mesopotamia after big game he, like a king in a fairy-tale, met and loved Ti, the daughter of Tushratta. They were married in due time, and Ti went down into Egypt with three hundred and seventeen of her principal ladies. This brought a host of their Semitic countrymen along, who found in Egypt a good field for their business capacities, and gradually, like the modern Jews in Russia, got possession of the lands and goods of their hosts. The influence of the Semitic queen is attested by the very fact that this library of cuneiform tablets was preserved. And under the feeble sovereigns who followed, her countrymen doubtless held their own.
(76) But at last came the nineteenth dynasty and the Pharaoh 'who knew not Joseph.' Then they were set to brick-making and pyramid-building, till the outbreak which led to the Red Sea triumph.

"Mr. Budge, of the British Museum, has translated three of the letters. One is from Tushratta to Ameno-phis. After many complimentary salutations, he proposes to his son-in-law that they should continue the arrangement made by their fathers for pasturing doublehumped camels, and in this way he leads up to the main purport of his epistle. He says that Manie, his great-nephew, is ambitious to marry the daughter of the king of Egypt, and he pleads that Manie might be allowed to go down to Egypt to woo in person. The alliance would, he considers, be a bond of union between the two countries, and he adds, as though by an after-thought, that the gold which Amenophis appears to have asked for should be sent for at once, together with 'large gold jars, large gold plates, and other articles made of gold.' After this meaning interpolation he returns to the marriage question, and proposes to act in the matter of the dowry in the same way in which his grandfather acted, presumably on a like occasion. He then enlarges on the wealth of his kingdom, where 'gold is like dust which cannot be counted,' and he adds an inventory of presents which he is sending, articles of gold, inlay, and harness, and thirty eunuchs."

In speaking of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, Dr. Knappert says:
(77) "According to the tradition preserved in Genesis, it was the promotion of Jacob's son, Joseph, to be viceroy of Egypt that brought about the migration of the sons of Israel from Canaan to Goshen. The story goes that this Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers, and after many changes of fortune received the viceregal office at Pharaoh's hands through his skill in interpreting dreams. Famine drives his brothers, and afterward his father, to him, and the Egyptian prince gives them the land of Goshen to live in. It is by imagining all this that the legend tries to account for the fact that Israel passed some time in Egypt. But we must look for the real explanation in a migration of certain tribes which could not establish or maintain themselves in Canaan, and were forced to move farther on."

The author of the *Religion of Israel* says: "The history of the religion of Israel must start from the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. Formerly it was usual to take a much earlier starting-point, and to begin with a discussion of the religious ideas of the patriarchs. And this was perfectly right so long as the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were considered historical. But now that a strict investigation has shown us that these stories are entirely unhistorical, of course we have to begin the history later on." The author of *The Spirit History of Man* says: "The Hebrews came out of Egypt and settled among the Canaanites. They need not be traced beyond the Exodus; that is their historical beginning. It was very easy to
(78) cover up this remote event by the recital of mythical traditions, and to prefix to it an account of their origin in which the gods (patriarchs) should figure as their ancestors."

But how about the Jewish exodus from Egypt? What was the real cause? Whom shall we credit, the writer of the book called Exodus or other writers? What follows differs very much from the Hebrew story.

Lysimachus relates that "a filthy disease broke out in Egypt, and the oracle of Ammon, being consulted on the occasion, commanded the king to purify the land by driving out the Jews (who were infected with leprosy, etc.), who were hateful to the gods. The whole multitude of the people were accordingly collected and driven out into the wilderness."

Diodorus Siculus says: "In ancient times Egypt was afflicted with a great plague, which was attributed to the anger of God on account of the multitude of foreigners in Egypt, by whom the rites of the native religion were neglected. The Egyptians accordingly drove them out. The most notable of them went under Cadmus and Danaus to Greece, but the greater number followed Moses, a wise and valiant leader, to Palestine."

Tacitus, the Roman historian, says: "In this clash of opinions one point seems to be universally admitted—a pestilential disease, disfiguring the race of man and making the body an object of loathsome deformity, spreading all over Egypt. Bocchoris, at that time the reigning monarch, consulted the oracle of
(79) Jupiter Hammon, and received for answer that the kingdom must be purified by exterminating the infected multitude, as a race of men detested by the gods. After diligent search the wretched sufferers were collected together, and in a wild and barren desert abandoned to their misery. In that distress, while the vulgar herd was sunk in deep despair, Moses, one of their number, reminded them that by the wisdom of his counsels they had been already rescued out of impending danger. Deserted as they were by men and gods, he told them that if they did not repose their confidence in him as their chief by divine commission they had no resource left. His offer was accepted. Their march began, they knew not whither. Want of water was their chief distress. Worn out with fatigue, they lay stretched on the bare earth, heartbroken, ready to expire, when a troop of wild asses, returning from pasture, went up the steep ascent of a rock covered with a grove of trees. The verdure of the herbage round the place suggested the idea of springs near at hand. Moses traced the steps of the animals, and discovered a plentiful vein of water. By this relief the fainting multitude was raised from despair."

In a learned work on Egypt by Mr. William Oxley of England, published in 1884, the author writes: "Taking the records as we find them, if they are real history, and as Palestine is contiguous to Egypt, we should naturally expect to find some reference to the Israelites in the Egyptian annals, but what does appear
(80) in regard to Palestine is certainly not favorable to the assumption that it was the home of the Israelites as a nation. I cull the following from such materials as are at present within reach, partly taken from the *Records of the Past*:

"It has been generally acknowledged by Egyptian biblicists that 'the cruel bondage of the Israelites, culminated under the reign of Rameses II., nineteenth dynasty, and that the Exodus took place under his successor, Menephtah I., 1326 b. c., who was drowned in the Red Sea with all his host in his attempt to bring the wanderers back again. But, as I have already said, the tomb of this very king at Thebes contains an inscription to the effect that he had lived to a good old age, and was a child of good-fortune from his cradle to the grave. In the annals of Rameses III., who reigned some fifty or sixty years after the Israelites *ought to have been* settled in their own land, many references are made to the country in which they were located (according to biblical accounts). The king goes to what is known to us as Palestine, Phœnicia, and Syria to receive the annual tribute from the chiefs/ whom he calls Khetas. In the enumeration of his conquests, extending from Egypt east and northward, he enumerates thirty-eight tribes and peoples, and says: 'I have smitten every land, and have taken every land in its extent.' In his reminder to the God Ptah of the benefits he had conferred on the god, the king says: 'I gave to thy temple from the store-houses of Egypt, Tar-neter, and Kharu (i, e. Palestine
(81) and Syria) more numerous offerings than the sand of the sea, as well as cattle and slaves' (Syrians). He also built a temple to Ammon in the same country, to which 'the nations of the Rutenna came and brought their tribute.' Making full allowance for the usual Egyptian flattery, the fact is clear that in the time of this king the Israelites could not have been a settled and distinct people; and the incident of their Exodus would have been too fresh and recent to be passed over without some comment by this vainglorious monarch.

"From a papyrus translated in the *Records of the Past* (ii. 107), entitled *Travels of an Egyptian*, who gives a full account of Palestine, etc., it appears there was a fortress there which had been built by Rameses II., and which was still belonging to Egypt. This would be about 1350 B. C.; but not the slightest hint of any such people as Israelites, although he tells us 'he visited the country to get information respecting the country, with the manners and customs of its inhabitants.'

"The next is Rameses XII., some two hundred years after the Exodus, who is the hero of the story of the possessed princess. He was in Mesopotamia at the time when the chief of the Bakhten brought his daughter, who afterward became queen of Egypt. 'His Majesty was there registering the annual tributes of all the princes of the countries,' among whom he enumerates Tar-neter (Palestine), but no mention of Israelites.

"I find no further trace until the time of Herodotus (about 420 B. c.); and here
(82) we come on historical ground. This great historian travelled through Egypt and Palestine in the reign of one of the kings of the Persian dynasty, about forty or fifty years after the alleged return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and when the temple had been built and the city fortified. He repeatedly alludes to

the Phœnicians and Syrians, whose country extended from the coast of the Levant down to the Egyptian frontier, including the isthmus and Sinaitic Peninsula. He says that Necho (about 670 b. c.) fought with the Syrians, and took a large city, Cadytis; but he makes no mention of Jews nor yet of Jerusalem. If they had been there, it is incredible that such a careful and grasping historian should have explored the land without noticing them in some way or other.

"The next is from a tablet erected to Alexander II. by Ptolemy, at that time viceroy under the Persian king, but who soon after himself became king of Egypt, 305 b. c. The inscription states that 'Alexander marched with an army of Ionians to the Syrians' land, who were at war with him. He penetrated its interior and took it at one stroke, and led their princes, cavalry, ships, and works of art to Egypt.'

"Next follows the third Ptolemy, 238 b. c. (see the Decree of Canopus, *Records of the Past*, viii., 81), who invaded the two lands of Asia, and brought back to Egypt all the treasures which had been carried away by Cambyses and his successors. He 'imported corn from East Rutenna and Kafatha'—i. e. from Syria and
(83) Phœnicia. It was the father of this king who is credited with sending to Judea for the seventy-two men who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek; and yet neither of these Ptolemaic kings makes mention of Judea, Jerusalem, or the Jews! The inference is obvious: *they were not there.*

"Many historiographers, when writing of Jewish annals, use the Ptolemaic and other monumental and papyrian accounts as applying to the Jews, and consequently use the term 'Jews,' but this is unwarrantable, inasmuch as the accounts themselves speak of 'Syrians, Phœnicians,' etc., but *not* of 'Jews.' According to the best cyclopædists, 'there is little or nothing known of the Jews or Jerusalem until the time of Christ;' and even then it is taken chiefly from Josephus, who, to my view, is scarcely admissible as a chronographer of actual history. No mention is made by the Ptolemies—say 250 or even less years b. c.—of the Jews of Jerusalem, and as the Roman emperor Hadrian (from 117 to 138 A. D.) is credited with changing the name of the city to *Ælia Capitolina*, it could only have been known as Jerusalem for a few centuries at most. The Arch of Titus in Rome is taken as conclusive proof that it was erected to commemorate his victories over the rebellious Jews and the successful siege of Jerusalem. But even this, I apprehend, is taken chiefly from Josephus. When in Rome last year I closely inspected this arch, expecting to find an inscription to this effect, but I was disappointed at seeing only a Latin one over the arch, which reads (in English): 'The Senate and
(84) Roman People to the Divine Titus, (Son) of the divine Vespasian,' and another, by Pius VII., recording its restoration. It is true, I saw the alto-reliefs on the inside of the arch, showing a table, trumpets, and a seven-branched lamp; but these were used in many temples, and would as well refer to the Syrian or Phœnician tem-

ples, which undoubtedly existed at that time, and in the absence of direct Roman testimony to the name of the city and people (of which I am unaware), it cannot be accepted as indubitable evidence of its reference to a city called and known to them as Jerusalem, and to a people known to them as Jews. Unless this can be established, it only amounts to an inference resting on Josephus.

"As the result of my researches, I place Jewish historians, so called, upon the same footing as the Christian ecclesiastical ones, whose works, while containing a base of more or less historical reference and truth, are yet too much overweighted with unhistorical myths to be regarded as genuine, sober history. To my view, the Jews were, at the period I am referring to, in a not dissimilar position to the Druses of Lebanon of the present day. As is well known to a certain class of writers who have come in contact with them, they form a community held together not so much by national ties as by semi-religious ones, which are based upon Cabalistic and theurgic rites and ceremonies. Like what I conceive the Jews to have been in the centuries preceding the Christian era, they are an *order* rather than a nation, the remains of systems which have continued and survived from ancient times. In
(85) this light the Jewish records are intelligible as writings veiled in allegory, treating of their mystic lore, albeit expressed in verbiage that bears a literal meaning upon its surface. I give this as the only solution that presents itself of the mysterious problem under review."

I now propose to state a few points from the Jewish writings themselves (collated from Bishop Colenso) to show the fabulous character of the history of this pretentious people.

The number of fighting-men who marched out of Egypt is nowhere estimated at less than 600,000, and if this represented only one-fourth of the population, the latter must have reached 3,000,000. If we cut this down one-third, so as to be sure of our figures, we make it 2,000,000 souls.

The number of the children of Israel who went into Egypt was 70 (Ex. 1: 5). They sojourned in Egypt 215 years. It could not have been 430 years, as would appear from Ex. 11:40. The marginal chronology makes the period 215 years, and there were only four generations to the Exodus—namely, Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses (Ex. 6: 16, 18, 20). How could these people have increased in 215 years from 70 souls so as to number 600,000 warriors? It would have required an average number of 46 children to each father. The 12 sons of Jacob had between them only 53 sons. At this rate of increase, in the fourth generation there would have been only 6311 males (provided they were all living at the time of the Exodus), instead
(86) of 1,000,000. If we add the fifth generation, who would be mostly children, the total number of males would not have exceeded 28,465.

All the first-born males from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered, were 22,273 (Num. 3: 43). The lowest computation of the whole num-

ber of the people at that time is 2,000,000. The number of males would be 1,000,000. Dividing the latter number by the number of first-born, gives 44, which would be the average number of boys in each family, or about 88 children by each mother. Or, if where the first-born were females, the males were not counted, the number of children by each mother would be reduced to 44.

Dan in the first generation had but one son (Gen. 46: 23), and yet in the fourth generation his descendants had increased to 62,700 warriors (Num. 2: 26), or 64,400 (Num. 26: 43). Each of his sons and grandsons must have had about 80 children of both sexes. On the other hand, the Levites increased the number of "males from a month old and upward" during the 38 years in the wilderness only from 22,000 to 23,000 (Num. 3: 39; 26: 62), and the tribe of Manasseh during the same time increased from 32,200 (Num. 1: 35) to 52,700 (26: 34).

The whole population of Israel were instructed in one single day to keep the passover, and actually did keep it (Ex. 12). At the first notice of any such feast Jehovah said, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night.*" The passover was
(87) to be killed "at even" on the same day that Moses received the command.

The women were at the same time ordered to borrow jewels of their neighbors, the Egyptians. After midnight of the same day the Israelites received notice to start for the wilderness. No one was to go out of his house till morning, when they were to take their hurried flight with their cattle and herds. How could 2,000,000 people, scattered about over a wide district, as they must have been with their cattle and herds, have gotten ready and taken a simultaneous hurried flight at twelve hours' notice?

The Israelites, with their flocks and herds, reached the Red Sea, a distance of from fifty to sixty miles over a sandy desert, in three days! Marching fifty abreast, the able-bodied warriors alone would have filled up the road for seven miles, and the whole multitude would have made a column twenty-two miles long, so that the last of the body could not have been started until the front had advanced that distance—more than two days' journey for such a mixed company. Then the sheep and cattle must have formed another vast column, covering a much greater tract of ground in proportion to their number. Upon what did these two millions of sheep and oxen feed in the journey to the Red Sea over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony alternately? How did the people manage with the sick and infirm, and especially with the seven hundred and fifty births that must have taken place in the three days' march?

Judah was forty-two years old when he went down with Jacob into Egypt,
(88) being three years older than his brother Joseph, who was then thirty-nine. For "Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh" (Gen. 41: 46); and from that time nine years elapsed (seven of plenty and two of famine) before Jacob came down into Egypt. Judah was born in the fourth year of Jacob's double

marriage (Gen. 29: 35), being the fourth of the seven children of Leah born in seven years; and Joseph was born of Rachel in the seventh year (Gen. 30: 24, 26; 21: 41). In these forty-two years of Judah's life the following events are recorded in Gen. 38:

He grows up, marries, and has three sons. His eldest son grows up, marries, and dies. The second son marries his brother's widow and dies. The third son, after waiting to grow to maturity, declines to marry the widow. The widow then deceives Judah himself, and bears him twins—Pharez and Zarah. One of these twins grows up and has two sons—Hez-ron and Hamul—bom to him before Jacob goes down into Egypt.

In Ex. 30:11-13, Jehovah commanded Moses to take a census of the children of Israel, and in doing it to collect half a shekel of the sanctuary as atonement-money. This expression "shekel of the sanctuary" is put into the mouth of Jehovah six or seven months before the tabernacle was made. In Ex. 38: 26 we read of such a tribute being paid, but nothing is there said of any *census* being taken, only that the number of those who paid, from twenty years old and upward, was 603,550
(89) men. In Num. 1: 1-46, more than six months after this occasion, an account of an actual census is given, but no *atonment-money* is mentioned. If in the first instance a census was taken, but accidentally omitted to be mentioned, and in the second instance the tribute was paid, but accidentally omitted likewise, it was nevertheless surprising that the number of adult males should have been identically the same (603,550) on both occasions, six months apart.

Aaron and his two sons were the only priests during Aaron's lifetime. They had to make all the burnt-offerings on a single altar nine feet square (Ex. 37: 1), besides attending to other priestly duties for 2,000,000 people. At the birth of every child both a burnt-offering and a sin-offering had to be made. The number of births must be reckoned as at least two hundred and fifty a day, for which consequently five hundred sacrifices would have to be offered daily—an impossible duty to be performed by three priests. For poor women pigeons were accepted instead of lambs. If half of them offered pigeons, and only one instead of two, it would have required 90,000 pigeons annually for this purpose alone. Where did they get the pigeons? How could they have had them at all under Sinai? There were thirteen cities where the presence of these three priests was required (Josh. 21: 19). The three priests had to eat a large portion of the bumt-offerings (Num. 18: 10) and all the sin-offerings—two hundred and fifty pigeons a day—more than eighty for each priest.

(90) In keeping the second passover under Sinai, 150,000 lambs must have been killed—i. e. one for each family (Ex. 12: 3, 4). The Levites slew them, and the three priests had to sprinkle the blood from their hands (1 Chron. 30: 16; 35: 11). The killing had to be done "between two evenings" (Ex. 12: 6), and the sprinkling

had to be done in about two hours. The killing must have been done in the court of the tabernacle (Lev. 1: 3, 5; 17: 2-6). The area of the court could have held but 5000 people at most. Here the lambs had to be sacrificed at the rate of 1250 a minute, and each of the three priests had to sprinkle the blood of more than 400 lambs every minute for two hours.

The number of warriors of the Israelites, as recorded at the Exodus, was 600,000 (Ex. 7: 37); subsequently it was 603,550 (Ex. 38: 25-28), and at the end of their wanderings it was 601,730 (Num. 26: 51). But in 2 Chron. 13:3, Abijah,
(80) king of Judah, brings 0,000 men against Jeroboam, king of Israel, with 0,000, and "there fell down slain of Israel 500,000 chosen men" (ver. 17). On another occasion, Pekah, king of Israel, slew of Judah in one day, 120,000 valiant men (2 Chron. 28: 6.)

The Israelites at their Exodus were provided with tents (Ex. 16: 16), in which they undoubtedly encamped and dwelt. They did not dwell in tents in Egypt, but in "houses" with "doors," "sideposts," and "lintels." These tents must have been made either of hair or of skin (Ex. 26: 7, 14; 36: 14, 19)—most probably of the latter—and were therefore much heavier than the modern canvas tents. At least
(91) 200,000 were required to accommodate 2,000,000 people. Supposing they took these tents from Egypt, how did they carry them in their hurried march to the Red Sea? The people had burdens enough without them. They had to carry their kneading-troughs with the dough unleavened, their clothes, their cooking utensils, couches, infants, aged and infirm persons, and food enough for at least a month's use, or until manna was provided for them in the wilderness, which was "on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 16:1). One of these tents, with its poles, pegs, etc., would be a load for
(20) a single ox, so that they would have needed 0.000 oxen to carry the tents. But oxen are not usually trained to carry goods on their backs, and will not do so without training. Then it is written:

"These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel" (Deut. 1: 1).

"And Moses called all Israel and said unto them" (Deut. 5:1).

"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" (Josh. 8: 35).

How was it possible to do this before at least

2,000,000 people? Could Moses or Joshua, as actual eye-witnesses, have expressed themselves in such extravagant language? Surely not.

(92) The camp of the Israelites must have been at least a mile and a half in diameter. This would be allowing to each person on the average a space three times the size of a coffin for a full-grown man. The ashes, offal, and refuse of the sacrifices would therefore have to be carried by the priest in person a distance of three-

quarters of a mile "without the camp, unto a clean place" (Lev. 4:11, 12.) There were only three priests—namely, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar—to do all this work for 2,000,000 people. All the wood and water would have to be brought into this immense camp from the outside. Where could the supplies have been got while the camp was under Sinai, in a desert, for nearly twelve months together? How could so great a camp have been kept clean?

But how huge does the difficulty become if we take the more reasonable dimensions of twelve miles square for this camp; that is, about the size of London! Imagine at least half a million of men having to go out daily a distance of six miles and back to the suburbs for the common necessities of nature, as the law directed.

The Israelites undoubtedly had flocks and herds of cattle (Ex. 34: 3). They sojourned nearly a year before Sinai, where there was no food for cattle; and the wilderness in which they sojourned nearly forty years is now and was then a desert (Deut. 32: 10; 8: 15). The cattle surely did not subsist on manna!

Among other prodigies of valor, 12,000 Israelites are recorded in Num. 31 as slaying all the male Midianites, taking captive all the females and children,
(93) seizing all their cattle and flocks, numbering 808,000 head, taking all their goods and burning all their cities, without the loss of a single man. Then they killed all the women and children except 32,000 virgins, whom they kept for themselves. There would seem to have been at least 80,000 females in the aggregate, of whom 48,000 were killed, besides (say) 20,000 boys. The number of men slaughtered must have been about 48,000. Each Israelite therefore must have killed 4 men in battle, carried off 8 captive women and children, and driven home 67 head of cattle. And then after reaching home, as a pastime, by command of Moses, he had to murder 6 of his captive women and children in cold blood.

Now, I respectfully submit that, judging from the account of the Exodus of the Jews, which they have written themselves, we cannot credit it. The narrative is full of contradictions, and is so absurd and incredible, and even impossible, that we must regard it as a *huge myth.* There may have been an Exodus from Egypt, of which this account is an exaggeration, but it bears so many evidences of the *fabulous* that we cast it aside and are led to doubt whether the Jews were ever in Egypt except as tramps and vagabonds, and to suspect that the whole story is an *adapted* history of some great exodus of some ancient tribes written for a *purpose.*

I think it has been shown that the Jews were not the people that they have been supposed to be. They are a modern people in the world's history, ante-
(94) dated by many highly-civilized and powerful nations. They are not descendants of Abram, as will be shown more fully hereafter, and their population never reached the fabulous numbers that are given in what is called their sacred history. Indeed, there is so much of the *fabulous* about them, so much of *false pretence* that upon the very face is impossible and incredible, that the wonder is that Christians

should ever have seriously thought of regarding them and their institutions as the source and substance of what Christianity is. We have no prejudice against the Jews. We cast no reflection upon the so-called Hebrews of the present day. They are not responsible for their ancestors, any more than Gladstone, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, and other brainy Englishmen are responsible for the savagery and barbarism of *their* forefathers.

It has been our object in this chapter to show the *Munchausenish* character of Jewish history, upon which the whole superstructure of modern theology rests. If anybody is proud of his descent from such a people, he is welcome to the glory.

(95)

CHAPTER IV. MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH

"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart."—2 Cor. 3:15.

THE first five books of the Old Testament, supposed by many to have been written by Moses, are called the Pentateuch. In the early chapters of Genesis, in the "Authorized Version," there is placed at the head of the page in the margin, "a. m. 1," which mean Anno Mundi—the year of the world—one, and immediately below it are the letters "b. c."—which mean Before Christ—"4004." This is the system of chronology established by Archbishop Ussher, and means that 4004 years before Christ the world was *one* year old. It is claimed that Moses promulgated the law about 1451 b. c., and this must have been about two thousand five hundred and fifty-three years after the Creation, which added to 1890, the present date, would make the world just five thousand eight hundred and ninety-four years old. Lyell, a most judicious geologist estimated the delta of the Mississippi at one hundred thousand years, and some persons think these figures should have been doubled. Professor John Fiske thinks the glacial period began two hundred and
(96) forty thousand years ago, and that human beings inhabited Europe at least one hundred and sixty thousand years earlier, thus giving an antiquity to our race of not less than four hundred thousand years. Other scientists talk of hundreds of

thousands, and even *millions*, of years, but we attach no importance to specific figures. We simply insist upon an antiquity which very far exceeds six thousand years.

Learned Egyptologists place Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the Jewish captivity, whose mummy is now to be seen in the museum at Cairo, at 1390 years b. c. It seems strange that his mummy should be on exhibition in a museum when "he and all his hosts were swallowed up in the Red Sea." If we are told that Rameses II. was succeeded by Sethi II., we find from Egyptian records that both of these kings lived to a good old age, and the mummy of each has been preserved, and not even a hint is given that either of them was drowned. But we have, according to the tables of Abydos and Bunsen, which are generally accepted, three thousand six hundred and twenty years before Christ as the time in which Menes, the first monarch of Egypt, reigned, making two thousand two hundred and thirty years as the period of the Egyptian monarchy before the reign of Rameses II.

But I contend that Egyptian civilization extends back at least seven thousand years, and Miss Amelia

B. Edwards, the Egyptologist, who has recently lectured in our Pennsylvania University course, thinks ten thousand years not too high an estimate. In
(97) support of ibis hypothesis, the great antiquity of man, which no scholar now disputes, carries us back many thousands of years beyond Menes, and there are many facts which favor the assumption that the valley of the Nile was one of the places inhabited for an indefinite period. The works of art—monuments, architecture, paintings, etc.—show an antiquity that cannot be estimated. Manetho, an Egyptian priest, who wrote a history of Egypt, by request of Ptolemy II., two hundred and eighty-six years before Christ, carries us back more than seven thousand years.

The Pentateuch is a compilation by several authors, and hence its patchwork character. Professors Ewald and Kuenen and others have proved this, and Dean Stanley, of the English Establishment, has admitted it. Some portions may have been compiled eight hundred or nine hundred years before Christ, but not the two contradictory accounts of the creation and fall of man. The Assyrian cuneiform tablets, which were discovered in 1873 and 1874 a. d., and which are now in the British Museum, show that this ancient people had this story about two thousand years before the time of Moses. The Jews learned it in Babylon, and none of the other Old-Testament writings contain any notice of it, because it was not known until after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, five hundred and eighteen years before Christ. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the various Old-Testament writers would have made some reference to the Pentateuch had they

(98) known of its existence? Professor François Lenormant of the National Library of France, a most learned archaeologist and palaeontologist, and a most devout Christian, in his *Beginnings of History* admits that the Jews borrowed substantially the story of the creation and the fall from more ancient nations, and furnishes the original copies. The legends recorded in Genesis are found among many ancient peoples who lived many centuries before Moses; and Berosus, a priest of the temple of Belus, who wrote two hundred and seventy-six years before Christ, affirms that fragments of Chaldean history can be traced back 15 Sadi or 150,000 years. I have mentioned these things because they are germane to what is to follow.

There is good reason for thinking that the book of Deuteronomy was written about six hundred and twenty-one years before Christ, and the remaining books of the Pentateuch were of later date, coming down to four hundred and fifty years before Christ. This Professor Kuenen has demonstrated beyond controversy in his *Religion of Israel*, to which I must refer for his arguments in detail. The best scholarship of the world does not believe that what is called the Law of Moses was written prior to the fifth or sixth century before Christ, and learned men in Holland, Germany, and England, as well as the most advanced thinkers in America, now accept this opinion. Professor Robertson Smith, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, adopts this view, and Dean Stanley, in his *Jewish Church*, does not leave us in doubt as to his opinion.

(99) Take the following as an example of what I mean (Gen. 12:6): "And the Canaanite was then in the land;" whereas the expulsion of the Canaanites did not occur until several centuries after the death of Moses, when this must have been written. In Gen. (36: 31) we read, "Before there reigned any king over Israel." This must have been two hundred years after the death of Moses. "The nations that were before you" (Lev. 13: 8) of course presupposes that the Canaanites had already been subdued. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:13), could hardly have been written by Moses himself. The expression "unto this day" frequently occurs, and shows that the time was long after the events took place. It is also implied in various places that the writer resided in Palestine, and so it could not have been Moses. In Deuteronomy (19: 14) we read, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark which they of old time have set in thine inheritance." They had no landmark to remove, unless this was written concerning the land of Canaan long after the death of Moses. They are reproached for not keeping the Sabbath in the past for a long time, and this is given as a reason for the Captivity; and hence Leviticus 26:34, 35, 43 was written after the Captivity, which began in 597 b. c. In Gen. 14:14, Lot is taken prisoner and rescued from his captors, whom they "pursued unto Dan." Now, there was no such place as Dan until after the entrance into Canaan. We

(100) read in Judg. 18:27, 29 that this city was called Laish, which was burned by the

Israelites, and then they built a city, and they called it "Dan, after the name of their father: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at first." This "trout in the milk" is as striking as if some one should write of Chicago when the Declaration of Independence was signed. In Gen. 36:31 we read, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." This passage shows that it was written after there had been kings in Israel, and could not have been written by Moses. I could show similar incongruities concerning the manna in Gen. 16: 35, compared with Josh. 5: 12. So Deut. 24: 14 must have been written after the entrance into Canaan, as until then they had no *lands*, and there were no gates and no "strangers within their gates." The same might be said of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue: the Israelites had no *gates* until after they entered Canaan. It could not have been written by Moses in the wilderness of Arabia.

These illustrations might be produced indefinitely, but enough have been given to show that the Pentateuch was written several hundred years after the death of Moses, and that we are justifiable in fixing the date for most of it in the fourth, fifth, or sixth century before the Christian era. The Pentateuch abounds in duplicate traditions of the same transactions, and also in diversity and contradictions. These numerous repetitions are fatal to the supposition that it was written
(101) by Moses. If Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, we should expect to find a good many hints of this in other parts of the Bible; whereas we have no reference to Sinai and its awful thunders, and, although Moses is mentioned in the New Testament, it only shows the existence of traditions to that effect at that time. Not until the time that Christianity arose, about thirteen hundred years after the death of Moses, did the tradition obtain currency that he was the author of the Pentateuch.

The fact is, the Jews are a comparatively modern people, and were not known as a nation until the time of Alexander the Great (356-325 b. c.), and Herodotus, by never mentioning them, so indicates. While the Hindoos, Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, Chaldeans, and Babylonians had their men of science, literature, and law, whose fame only brightens with the flight of time, the Jews have no *history* except what was written by themselves, and that is so absurd, impossible, and contradictory that nobody can believe it.

Everybody knows that the ancient Jews were the constitutional imitators of other peoples. They have always been the second-hand clothes-dealers of the world. As a race they never have been noted for originality, but have always been ready to borrow what belonged to other people, and then, with characteristic self-complacency, have claimed to be the "original Jacobs" of everything good and great. We intend this as no reflection upon the Jews of the present day.

(102) C. Staniland Wake, an English writer, in his great work on the *Evolution of Morality*, vol. ii., page 59, thus expresses his views: "Judging from this fact, many persons imagine—or at least, from the superstitious reverence that they have for the Decalogue, appear to do so—that until the time of the Hebrew lawgiver the most ordinary rules of morality were unknown. The mere fact of Egypt being the starting-point of the Exodus ought to be sufficient to disabuse the mind of this idea, without reference to the contents of the code itself. But the moral laws given in the Decalogue are of so primitive a character that it is absurd to suppose, except on the assumption that the Hebrews were at that period in a condition of pure savagery, that God would personally appear to give his immediate sanction to them. The commands, Honor thy father and thy mother, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, Thou shalt not covet, were simply *reiterations* of laws to which the Hebrews had been subject during their whole sojourn in Egypt, and which must, in fact, have been familiar to them before their ancestors left their traditional Chaldean home."

Then we must bear in mind that Moses himself was an Egyptian by birth, and that he was brought up at the court of Pharaoh until he was forty years of age, and in Acts 7: 22 we are told that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

(103) The whole matter relating to the Pentateuch is thus summed up by the late Prof. John Wm. Draper, M. D., LL.D., late of the University of New York, in his *Conflict between Religion and Science*: "No man may dare to impute them (the books of the Pentateuch) to the inspiration of Almighty God, their inconsistencies, incongruities, and impossibilities, as exposed by many learned and pious modern scholars, both German and English, are so great. It is the decision of these critics that Genesis is a narrative based upon legends; that Exodus is not historically true; that the whole Pentateuch is *unhistoric* and *un-Mosaic*: it contains the most extraordinary contradictions and impossibilities, sufficient to involve the credibility of the whole—imperfections so conspicuous that they would destroy the authenticity of any modern historical work."... "To the critical eye they all present peculiarities which demonstrate that they were written on the banks of the Euphrates, and not in the desert of Arabia. They contain many Chaldaisms."... "From such Assyrian sources the legends of the creation of the earth and heavens, the Garden of Eden, the making of man from clay and the woman from one of his ribs, the temptation of the serpent, etc.,... were obtained by Ezra." "I agree in the opinion of Hupfeld, that the discovery that the Pentateuch is put together out of the various sources of original documents is beyond all doubt, is not only one of

the most important and most pregnant with consequences for the interpretation of the historical books of the Old Testament—or rather for the whole of theology and history—but it is also one of the most certain discoveries which have been
(104) made in the domain of criticism and the history of literature."

But not only do the laws of Egypt antedate the laws accredited to Moses, but the Hindoos had laws which were yet more ancient. The writings of Buddha, who died in 477 b. c., refer to older books and quote from them, and these again refer to still older books, until we reach laws which existed many thousands of years before the Law of Moses, as the laws of Manu were drawn from the "immemorial customs" of the nation and constitute a kind of *common law*. "The most accurate scholars point to India as the origin of Egyptian civilization," says Le Renouf, the learned Egyptologist.

If Egyptian literature was derived in a remote period from India, what must be the date of old India's laws as compared with the laws of the Hebrews? It is no wonder that Max Müller, professor in the orthodox University of Oxford, says (in Chips, vol. i., p. 11): "After carefully examining every possible objection that can be made against the date of the Vedic hymns, their claim to that high antiquity which is ascribed to them has not, as far as I can judge, been shaken." The same learned Sanskrit scholar says, "The opinion that the pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempt at explaining Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew" (*Science of Religion*, p.
(105) 24). This great Sanskrit scholar admits in many places in his voluminous writings the greater antiquity of the pagan scriptures, and gives many weighty reasons to show how impossible and absurd it is to suppose that they have been changed and interpolated to adapt them to more modern times.

The Vedas, the sacred writings of the Hindoos, according to Sir William Jones the Orientalist, "cannot be denied to have an antiquity the most distant." According to the Brahmans, they are coeval with the creation, and the Sama-Veda says, "They were formed of the soul of Him who exists by, or of, himself." The Hindoo laws were codified by Manu and copied by all antiquity, notably by Rome in the compilation or digest of the laws of all nations called the Code of *Justinian*, which has been adopted as the foundation of all modern legislation. I could, did time permit, furnish the laws of Manu, the Justinian Code, and the Civil Code of Napoleon in parallel columns, in a way to show their common origin beyond a doubt. Laws of betrothal and marriage, paternal authority, tutelage, and adoption; property, contract, deposit, loan, sale, partnership, donation, and testamentary bequest,—all were elaborately promulgated by the Code of Manu in 2680 *slocas*.

Laws were arranged under eighteen principal heads, concerning as many different causes for which laws are enacted: Debts, deposits and loans for use, sale without ownership, gifts, non-payment of wages, agreements, sale and purchase, disputes, boundaries, assaults, slander, robbery and violence, adultery, altercation
(106) between man and wife, inheritance, and gaming. "The court of Brahma with four faces" is where four learned Brahmans sat in judgment, one of whom was the king's chief counsellor.

One of their trite sayings was, "When justice, having been wounded by iniquity, approaches the court, and the judges extract not the arrow or dart, they also shall be wounded by it."

The mode of conducting lawsuits was, in a great degree, similar to that used in all civilized countries of the present day. The oath taken by witnesses was as follows: "What ye know to have been transacted in the matter before us, between the parties reciprocally, declare at large and with truth, for your evidence in the cause is required."

"The witness who speaks falsely shall be fast bound under water in the snaky cords of Varuna, and be wholly deprived of power to escape torment during a hundred transmigrations."

Brahmans were banished for giving false evidence, but all others were punished by blows on the abdomen, the tongue, feet, eyes, nose, and ears, and in capital cases blows were inflicted upon the whole body.

Some of the moral sayings of the Hindoos run thus: "He who bestows gifts for worldly fame, while he suffers his family to live in distress, touches his lips with honey, but swallows poison. Such virtue is counterfeit. Even what he does for his spiritual body, to the injury of those he is bound to maintain, shall bring
(107) him ultimate misery, both in this world and the next.

"Content, returning good for evil, resistance to sensual appetite, abstinence from illicit gains, knowledge of tbe Vedas, knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, veracity, and freedom from wrath, form the tenfold system of duties.

"Honor thy father and thy mother. Forget not the favors thou hast received. Learn whilst thou art young. Seek the society of the good. Live in harmony with others. Remain in thine own place.

"Speak ill of none. Ridicule not bodily infirmities. Pursue not a vanquished foe. Deceive even not thy enemies. Forgiveness is sweeter than revenge. The sweetest bread is that earned by labor. Knowledge is riches.

"What one learns in his youth is as lasting as graven on stone. The wise is he who knows himself. Speak kindly to the poor. Discord and gaming lead to misery. He misconceives his interest who violates his promise.

"There is no tranquil sleep without a good conscience, nor any virtue without religion. To honor thy mother is the most acceptable worship. Of women the

fairest ornament is modesty."

The following, from the laws of Manu (lib. iii. Sloca 55), will contrast strangely with the law of Moses regarding the treatment of women and the esteem in which they should be held:

"Women should be nurtured with every tenderness and attention by their
(108) fathers, their brothers, their husbands, and their brothers-in-law, if they desire great prosperity."

"Where women live in affliction the family soon becomes extinct; but when they are loved and respected, and cherished with tenderness, the family grows and prospers in all circumstances."

"When women are honored the divinities are content; but when we honor them not all acts of piety are sterile."

"The households cursed by the women to whom they have not rendered due homage find ruin weigh them down and destroy them as if smitten by some secret power."

"In the family where the husband is content with his wife, and the wife with her husband, happiness is assured for ever."

That there were many trivial things in the ancient pagan laws, and many practices prevailed among a portion of the people which seem idolatrous, we freely admit; but the same is true of many of the Hebrew laws, which are too obscene for quotation here. We also find among the Hebrews all forms of *nature-worship*, such as sun-worship, tree-worship, fire-worship, ser-pent-worship, and phallic-worship. Of this more later on.

Besides the Hindoos and the Egyptians, there were many nations more ancient than the Hebrews. The Grecian Argos was founded 1807 b. c. Athens and
(109) Sparta existed 1550 b. c. Then there were the Phœnicians, a maritime people who flourished more than five thousand years ago, whose monuments and inscriptions are found in Palestine to-day, while the Hebrews have left us neither monument nor inscription. The Chaldeans established a monarchy four thousand or five thousand years ago, and three thousand five hundred or four thousand years back the Assyrians became masters of the valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and from these people the Jews got all they ever knew about things subsequently recorded in the Pentateuch.

The Jewish and Christian religions (for they are claimed to be one) are next to being the *youngest*, or most modern, of any of the *great religions* of the world, the Mohammedan being the last. Each claimed divine authority; all had their lawgivers, priests, and prophets, who wrote, as they claimed, their bibles by *divine* inspiration. The error of Judaism is in claiming the greatest antiquity, as well as claiming to be the only religion having the divine sanction.

I cannot refrain from mentioning some things which cannot be regarded as wholly irrelevant. Moses had a very remarkable experience in his infancy. At his birth he was placed in an ark and set afloat on the Nile, and was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who called a nurse for him who proved to be his mother. We have many counterparts of this in Grecian and Egyptian mythology. *Perseus* was shut up in a chest and cast into the sea by the king of Argos, and was found by Dictys, who educated him. *Bacchus* was confined in a chest by order of the
(110) king of Thebes, and was cast upon the Nile. He had two mothers—natural and adopted. *Osiris*, the Egyptian divinity, was confined in a coffer and thrown into the river. He floated to Phœnicia. His mother wandered in silence and grief to Byblos, and was selected by the king's servants and taken to the palace, and was made *the nurse* of the young prince. We could give several other parallel cases, but we pause and wonder whether the reported experience of Moses was not another version of the same myth.

We next find this "greatest of statesmen and lawgivers" a fugitive from justice (Ex. 2: 11-15). He had killed a man and buried him in the sand, and when he learned that the murder was known by the Hebrews, and Pharaoh sought to slay him, he fled to the land of Midian and tended the flocks of Jethro, a priest, until he was eighty years old. He knew then that it was wrong to kill just as well as he did after receiving the Ten Commandments; for he "looked this way and that" to find out whether any one saw him, and "he feared, and said, Surely this is known." He showed a sense of *guilt*. He always seemed afraid of Pharaoh on account of this murder.

He was next commissioned to deliver his brethren from their bondage in Egypt, and was instructed to say that "*I Am that I Am*" had sent him (Ex. 3: 14). Now, it seems to me very strange that Nuk-Pa-Nuk was the Egyptian name for God, and means, "*I Am that I Am!*" (Bonwick, *Egyptian Belief *, p. 395). This name was found upon an Egyptian temple, according [pg 111] to Higgins (*Anacalypsis*, vol. ii. p. 17), who says, "*I Am* was a divine name understood by all the initiated among the Egyptians;" and Bunsen affirms, in his *Keys of St. Peter*, that the "*I Am* of the Hebrews was the same as the *I Am* of the Egyptians."

There is another peculiarity about Moses that seems strange to me. In his statue in Fairmount Park he is represented as having horns, and he is so portrayed in the statue by Michael Angelo. Now the sun-god Bacchus had *horns*, and so had Zeus, the Grecian supreme deity. *Bacchus* was called "the Lawgiver," and it is said that his laws were written upon *two tables of stone*. It is also said that he and his army enjoyed the *light of the sun* (pillar of fire) during the night-time, and he, like Moses, had a *rod* with which divers miracles were wrought. The Persian legend relates that Zoroaster received from Ormuzd the Book of the Law upon a *high mountain. Minos* received on Mount Dicta, from Zeus, the supreme god, *the law*.

(112) There are many such cases. Even Mohammed, it is said, so received the Koran.

Then the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses and his three millions of absconding slaves "dry-shod," and the "rock in the wilderness giving forth water when struck by the rod of Moses," both have several parallels. Orpheus, the earliest poet of Greece, relates how *Bacchus* had crossed *the Red Sea dry-shod* at the head of his army, and how he "divided the waters" of the rivers Orontes and Hydaspis and passed through them "dry-shod," and how he *drew water from the rock [pg 112] with his wonderful rod.* Professor Steinthal notes the fact "that almost all the acts of Moses correspond to those of the *sun-gods.*" It may seem strange that the Hebrews were acquainted with Grecian mythology, yet we know this was the fact. Rev. Dr. Isaac M. Wise says, "The Hebrews adopted forms, terms, ideas, and myths of all nations with whom they came in contact, and, like the Greeks, in their way cast them all in a peculiar Jewish religious mould."

Moreover, there are strange inconsistencies and contradictions connected with the alleged giving of the Law to Moses. In both Exodus and Deuteronomy God is represented as *speaking* the words, and in Deut. 5:22 it is said God "*wrote* them on two tables of stone" after speaking them, and in Ex. 24: 28 *Moses* is represented as doing the writing: "And *he* wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." We here find a hundred commandments, more or less, of a ceremonial character, and only *one* of the original ten, the one relating to the Sabbath, and we here find "earing-time and harvest" made a season of rest just as much as the Sabbath. Then there are different reasons given for the observance of the Sabbath in Ex. 20 and Deut. 5—the one that God "rested on the seventh day" after creating all things in six days (of course this was in six days of twenty-four hours each, else there was no pertinency in the reason); and the other, that it was in commemoration of the deliverance of the Hebrews from the bondage in Egypt.

(113) It has been claimed that at least the Sabbath is an institution first established in the Decalogue of Exodus, and yet even this must be denied. Evidences of the observance of the seventh day as sacred are found in the calendars of the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians, and the *Records of the Past* assert that Sabbath observance was in existence at least eleven hundred years before Moses or Exodus among the Accadians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians.

There are also great variances in the language of the two accounts in Exodus and Deuteronomy, which could not have existed if copied from what God had written in stone. The second table of stone was an exact copy of the first (Deut. 10:2). When Moses got excited at Aaron's golden calf and broke the two tables of stone containing the Law, and God was going to destroy the people, Moses dissuaded him from doing so by telling him what the Egyptians would then say about him! (Num. 14; 13-16.)

It is worthy of note that the first commandment is of doubtful *monotheism*: Thou shalt have no "other gods before me," implying that there were other gods. Then there is something not pleasant in the idea of a "jealous God," as used in this commandment and frequently in other places. Contrast this with the Hindoo *Geeta*, where God is represented as saying, "They who serve even other gods, with a firm belief in doing so, involuntarily worship Me. I am He who partaketh of all worship, and I am their reward." God is defined in the Hindoo *Vedas* as, "He
(114) who exists by himself, and who is in all because all is in him; whom the spirit can alone perceive; who is imperceptible to the organs of sense; who is without visible parts, Eternal, the Soul of all being, and whom none can comprehend." "God is one, immutable, without form or parts, infinite, omnipresent, and omnipotent." No need to prohibit the making of a "graven image" to represent such a god.

Now take Moses' description of God. He only saw his "back parts" (Ex. 33: 22, 23), and God held his hand over him when in the cleft of the rocks while he passed by, that he might not see his glory. And, while it is said, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live" (Ex. 33: 20), yet "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. 33:11). He was with him in the mountain forty days and nights, and saw him and talked to him, and so did at least seventy-three other persons (Ex. 24: 9). Yet we are told in John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time."

Then there are many other "commandments" in the Bible which cannot be reconciled with the "Ten Commandments," and very many acts regarded as criminal in this nineteenth century which are not forbidden, but indirectly or tacitly sanctioned. One of the "Ten Commandments" is, "Thou shalt not kill," but husbands are directed to *kill* their wives if they propose to them a change of religion, and killing is commanded in numerous instances and for trivial offences, such as
(115) picking up sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath.

Take the following as specimens of the cruelty of Moses:

"But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save nothing alive that breatheth" (Deut. 20:16).

Here is another of his injunctions: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor" (Ex. 32:27).

Here is another: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel [some four hundred years before], how he laid wait for him," etc. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15: 2, 3). This was sweeping, merciless revenge on the innocent.

He commands the Jews to swindle the Egyptians by false pretence, "spoiling" them of their jewelry (Ex. 3:19-22). He authorized them to take *usury* of strangers, but not of one another; and to sell the "flesh of animals that had died of themselves" to strangers and aliens, but not to run the risk of poisoning themselves (Deut. 14:21).

In the affair with the Midianites *Moses was more cruel than the officers and*
(116) *common soldiery.* He was "*wroth with them*" because they had saved all the women alive, and required that they should go back and finish the brutal butchery. I cannot do this subject justice without transcribing a large portion of Num. 31:

"And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

"And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian; Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

"And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

"And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

"And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.

"And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

"And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

"And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over
(117) thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

"And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?

"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.

"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

"But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."

What shall we say when we remember that Moses found a refuge with the Midianites for forty years when he was a fugitive from justice for the murder of the Egyptian, and the Midianites were the first to show the Jews hospitality when they escaped from the bondage of Egypt? Moreover, Moses had married a woman of Midian, and might have been supposed to have some regard for her kinswomen.

It cannot be claimed that Moses was compelled by the low condition of the people to treat the Midianites thus, for he was the *sole author* of this extreme butchery of women and children, and was "wroth" with his officers for not committing the atrocity in the first place. True, he charges the women with having "caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor but this could not justify the butchery of some forty-eight thousand women and twenty thousand boys, besides the old men. And
(118) then the thirty-two thousand virgins had a fate *worse than death*, though called the 'Lord's tribute'," and the priests got their full share of the spoil. For those who would justify such cruelty and wholesale butchery, as they would justify famine and pestilence the effect of natural laws, I can have no very great respect.

It has been said, "Cruel as many of the Mosaic punishments undoubtedly were, it is well to remember that two hundred years ago the criminal code of England was almost, if not equally, bloody. If Moses stoned adulteresses to death, it is not very long since we put witches and Quakers to death, while in many other countries the stake and the fagot were the chief arguments in aid of orthodoxy. It would not be just to judge of the punishments inflicted over three thousand years ago from the standpoint of the present century, when the Mosaic dispensation has passed away and that of the law of love substituted. There was no mercy in the smoking rocks of Sinai. There was nothing but the law in all its sternness."

This is all very well, but we should remember that the cruel criminal codes of modern times got their cruelty from the Mosaic code. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Ex. 22: 18) was one of the laws of Moses, and from first to last thirty thousand witches were' executed in Great Britain and two hundred thousand in Germany. Sir Matthew Hale pronounced the death-sentence on a "witch," and Blackstone, the great commentator, thought that witchcraft must be real because
(119) the Bible said there were witches! Scotland continued to burn witches until 1722, and Germany until 1780, while in 1515 there were five thousand witches burned at Geneva. I am ashamed to speak of our own hanging of witches in Massachusetts, but it is very well known that it was done by authority of the law of Moses: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20: 27).(1)

Rev. Rabbi Hirsch sums up his conclusions as the result of his study of the Pentateuch:

"The non-authenticity of the Pentateuch is shown by the work itself. It is indicated by—(1) The impossible occurrences in the desert; (2) The various contradictions and repetitions, as in the descriptions of the festivals; the provision of the officiators for the sacrifices; the appropriations of the tithes; the rules for sacrificing the first-born children to Deity—the law regulating these matters varying in

Deuteronomy and Numbers; (3) Certain phrases used, as "up to the present day," which lose all significance if applied to Moses. Thus the book itself shows not one author, but many.

"The non-authenticity of the Pentateuch is shown also by lack of reference to it in the prophetical and historical books. Jeremiah, when denouncing in unmeasured terms the very sins prohibited by the Decalogue, never uses the language of those cardinal rules of morality; the prophecies show no trace of the priestly
(120) ordinances; and, though most of the laws refer to Sinai, the name occurs in none of the prophetical books.

(1) In 1865 the witch-laws were yet in force in South Carolina!

"It contains old songs; embodies the written law or judicial decisions of the Israelites in the Book of the Covenant; springs from two currents of history, the Elohist and Jehovist, the former composed of the younger Elohist of the South and the older Elohist of the North; shows Deuteronomy very much altered from its original form by emendations and additions, being formerly without the first four and the closing chapters, and the Levitical Law or Priestly Codex having been later incorporated with Joshua and the books of Moses; and lastly it is marred by changes made in accordance with the new religious spirit."

We know very little about Moses. If there ever was such a man—which is very doubtful, taking the writings accredited to him for authority—he is not shown to have been "the greatest statesman and lawgiver the world has ever produced." Neither have the Jews ever developed, in ancient or modern times, such a moral character as a people as to justify the supposition that they had a great and inspired leader among them, and that he taught them anything not well known for many centuries before to more ancient and more intelligent nations.

The assumption that Moses was the author, under divine guidance, of what is commonly called the *Ten Commandments,* about one thousand four hundred and fifty-one years before the Christian era, is *assumption* only, without a particle of
(121) proof to sustain it. What are commonly called the laws of Moses were written by some person or persons unknown in the fifth or sixth centuries before the beginning of Christianity. Most of the matter of what is called the Pentateuch was borrowed from older and wiser nations—the Egyptians, the Hindoos, the Greeks, etc. But for the unbounded credulity on this subject it would seem like an insult seriously to discuss the question, Which are the older writings? and, Which the substantial copies? Unless a man is ready to take assumptions for demonstrated facts, to ignore the museums and libraries, to question the conclusions of the profound-est antiquarians, and to make the stream of history flow backward, he must admit that the Hebrews were the borrowers.(1)

(1) The substance of this chapter was published in March, 1890, in *An Open Letter* to Hon. Edward M. Paxson, Chief-Justice of Pennsylvania, who had affirmed in a lecture before the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania that the "law of Sinai was the first of which we have any knowledge," and that "Moses was the greatest statesman and lawgiver the world has ever
(122) produced."

CHAPTER V. ANCIENT SYMBOLISM AND MODERN LITERALISM

"Which things are an allegory."—Gal. 4:24.

WORSHIP is natural to man, and all systems of religion, many think, received their cult from Nature-worship. Typology, mythology, theology followed each other as the links of a well-forged chain.

Cicero well suggested: "Do you not see how, from the beginning, from the productions of nature and the useful inventions of men have arisen fictitious and imaginary deities, which have been the foundations of false opinions, pernicious errors, and miserable superstitions?" He asserts that "if the sacred mysteries celebrated by the most ancient peoples were properly understood, they would rather explicate the nature of things than portray the knowledge of the gods." Plato said he "would exclude from his ideal republic the poems of Homer, because the young would not be able to distinguish between what was allegorical and what was actual." Proclus alleges that even Plato himself drew many of his peculiar dogmas from the symbolisms of the ancients. It is also said that he was curious to find out what was the secret meaning of the allegories of the more ancient sages and
(123) philosophers, while at the same time he affirmed that what he should successfully find out he would keep to himself. It is well known that the real offence of Socrates was in publishing to the common people the wisdom secreted by other teachers. Heyne has truly said that "from myths all the history and all the philosophy of the

ancients proceed." Gerald Massey, in his great work *The Natural Genesis*, claims that it is only in the symbolic stage of expression that we can expect to recover the lost meanings of priestly dogmas. These are preserved in the gesture-signs, ideographic types, images, and myths scattered over the world. The symbolic extends beyond the written or spoken language of any people now extant.

He well says that "ancient symbolism was a mode of expression which has bequeathed a mould of thought that imprisons the minds of myriads as effectually as the toad shut up in the rock in which it dwells is confined." Myths and allegories, anciently unfolded to initiates in the mysteries, have been ignorantly adopted by modern priests and published to the world as the literal truth. The main dogmas of modern theology are based on distorted myths, "under the shadow of which we have been cowering as timorously as birds in a stubble when an artificial kite in the shape of a hawk is hovering overhead." Modern dogmatic theology is largely what Mr. Massey has tersely called "fossilized symbolism." It was the habit of the Oriental mind to personify almost everything. Ancient mystics veiled all their
(124) thoughts in allegory and draped their sacred lessons in symbols. They invented many poetic riddles and fantastic stories, which the initiated knew to be fanciful, but which in time came to be regarded by the masses as substantial historic facts. It is well known that this method was not confined to the ancients, but played a conspicuous part in the Middle Ages, and that its baneful influence is not yet exhausted. It will hereafter be shown that in no writings extant can be found so many illustrations of the symbolic method of teaching as in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Even in our day the common people have not outgrown this habit of personification, and are wont to tell their children of Santa Claus and Kriss Kringle who bring them presents at Christmastime, and of Jack Frost who will bite them if they go out in the cold. Modern folk-lore is full of symbolisms and personifications, as real to multitudes as are the mythical stories found in writings supposed to contain an infallible divine revelation.

A large number of learned authors favor the theory that all systems of dogmatic theology are mythic suggestions of the phenomena of physical nature, postulated by philosophers and poets in the most ancient periods of the world. They maintain this hypothesis, in part from the well-known fact that many of the most widely-separated peoples, who never could have had any intercourse, directly or indirectly, have used the same imagery and substantially adopted the same systems of religion. This suggestion regarding Nature-worship is worthy of careful
(125) and reverent examination. Primitive peoples, living mostly in the open air, were brought in close contact with external natural objects and phenomena. One of the most prevalent forms of religion in ancient times was *tree-worship,* and it entered largely into the religious thought of the ancient Jews. The tree furnished the food, mainly, upon which our race in its infancy depended for subsistence.

The grove was called "the retreat beloved by gods and men." It furnished shelter from storm, and shade from the tropical sun. It was a place of rest and a thing of beauty. Mr. Barlow, in his excellent book on Symbolism, says the most generally-received symbol of life was a tree. It was inseparable from the ancient conception of a garden. It was the "tree of life" in the mythic paradise. It was suggestive of passion and offspring in connection with the serpent, which was an emblem of male virility. The tree has many suggestions, not only in it leaves, but in its fruit and mode of propagation. The sap of certain trees has an exhilarating, and even an intoxicating, quality. The sacred soma was taken before reading the Vedic hymns "to quicken the memory." It was supposed to promote spirituality and inspiration. Various trees and plants are suggestive of fertility and fecundity in man. The lotus is the flower of Venus. There is a "language of trees" as well as "language of flowers." There are poetic and symbolic reasons in the form of the stems and shape of the leaves for the display of orange-blossoms as bridal decorations, as thoughtful
(126) botanists can readily see. Much of the symbolism of the Old Testament is identical with the Eastern tree-worship; and without some knowledge of this form of imagery much of the Hebrew Scriptures must remain a dead letter. The frequent references to palms, cedars, oaks, vines, mandrakes, etc. etc., are vastly significant to the adept in symbolism.

The Jewish Bible is full of Nature-worship to all whose eyes are not veiled by sacerdotalism. The fact that God is said to have appeared to Moses in the burning bush is suggestive of both tree- and fire-worship (Ex. 3: 2). Josephus says, "The bush was holy before the flame appeared in it and because it was holy it became the vehicle of the burning, fiery, jealous God of the Jews. Even our Christmas evergreens contain a recognition of the gods of the trees. The feet is, many of the religious rites of both Jews and Christians are but slight modifications of the ancient Nature-worship, as all well-read men know, but to which truth our modern theologians are as blind as bats. Abraham, the alleged progenitor of the Jewish nation (so called), is represented as a dissenter from the religion of his native country; yet he, and his descendants and followers after him for hundreds of years, employed the same religious symbols and forms of worship used by the people of Chaldea and other so-called idolatrous nations. Read the solemn arraignment of the "chosen people" by the prophet, recorded in Ezek. 16:15 to the
(127) end of that chapter, if you would have proof of this charge. The fact is, if we treat the story of Abraham and other so-called Old-Testament patriarchs as we do the traditions of other nations, we shall be forced to give it an esoteric interpretation rather than a literal or an historic one. But more of this farther on.

Serpent-worship is another form of sacred symbolism, and has an intimate connection with phallic rites. The serpent was not at first a personification of evil, but of wisdom, and is so used in our New Testament, "… wise (shrewd) as

serpents, harmless as doves." It also denotes the art or gift of healing, and was not only so used by Esculapius, but also by Moses, and is recognized as a type by Jesus himself: "… And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have, eternal life" (Num. 21:9; John 3:14, 15). Indeed, the serpent has almost universally been regarded as a symbol of immortal life, and especially, as frequently presented in ancient sculptures, with its tail in its mouth, thus forming an endless circle. This idea may have been suggested at first by its tenacity of life, and its being so thoroughly alive in all its parts, its body and tail moving and living after its head has been crushed; and, further, from the periodic renewal of its skin, suggesting a new and continuous life. Then there are other significant qualities in the serpent—viz. its power of voluntary enlargement and self-erection, combined with its intense gaze and wonderful secret of fascination and its noiseless
(128) and mysterious movement—all suggestive of the *spirituel*. It is also a symbol of power and divinity, and as such was embroidered upon ancient robes and flags of royalty. Upon a decorative banner recently displayed upon the walls of an edifice in Philadelphia wherein recently met the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the symbolic serpent was prominent; and those who criticised it were silenced by a member's pointing to the fact that the serpent is engraved upon the seal of the General Assembly itself. Think of Presbyterians perpetuating serpent-symbolism!

It was doubtless the emblematic snakes which had been used in Ireland in the Druidic worship, before the introduction of Christianity, that the somewhat mythical St. Patrick drove out of the "Emerald Isle"—all the snakes according to Romish tradition, now believed by millions of devout worshippers to be strictly historical, though known by priests to be mythical. He destroyed the emblematic serpents. It was not until after the invention of the talking subtle serpent that tempted Eve in Eden that the serpent became a symbol of evil. The Jews never heard of that "old serpent the devil" until after their captivity in Babylon. We must not fail, however, according to the Old Testament, to give King Hezekiah credit for having been a sort of Hebrew St. Patrick, in attempting to drive serpent-worship from among the Israelites after it had prevailed among them for about seven hundred years.

(129) In a line or two we sum up the symbolism of the serpent, as has been suggested, in that it is thoroughly alive, has a fiery nature, is swift in motion, and moves without bands or feet. It assumes a variety of forms, is long-lived, and renews its youth by shedding its external covering, and at pleasure stands erect, enlarges its size, is strong, and is said to have the marvellous secret of fascination.

Initiates worshipped only the qualities or principles symbolized by outward forms, while the ignorant may have really worshipped the external or literal ob-

ject. Every quality in the objects of the ancient Nature-worship has suggested a religious dogma, which was first incorporated into ancient systems of sacerdotalism, and can now be traced in an occult and esoteric sense in all bodies of modern dogmatic theology. Ninety-nine out of every one hundred of professional ecclesiastics are as ignorant of these things as unborn babes, while the select few know, but conceal, the truth. The larger class are honest dupes and dunces, while the others are hypocrites and impostors.

Phallieism, the worship of the genital organs, was another form of natural symbolism. Men saw that in some mysterious way the race was propagated by the congress of the generative organs, male and female, and soon naturally worshipped them as at least the symbols of the unknown fecundating power of the universe.

This form of symbolism prevailed in the most distant ages, and has continued in many countries unto the present time. Richard Payne Knight, an honorable
(130) English gentleman, in 1865 wrote a quarto book, of which only two hundred copies were printed, entitled *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus, and its Connection with the Theology of the Ancients*, in which this whole subject is boldly discussed, and phallicism illustrated by one hundred and thirty-eight engravings, many of them copied from actual emblems now preserved in the British Museum and in the Secret Museum in Naples. Major-General Forlong, of the British army, has also fully presented this subject in his recent quarto in two volumes, entitled *Rivers of Life; or, Sources and Streams of the Faiths of Man in all Lands.*

It would doubtless astound many modern theologians to be told that even the Jews did not escape the influence of this form of Nature-worship, and that our Bible, especially the Old Testament, contains many evidences of it; and yet it is a fact. Circumcision was no doubt an offshoot of phallicism. It did not originate with Abraham. It was known by the Egyptians, Abyssinians, and African tribes long before the time he is said to have lived. It was practised, according to Herodotus, at least twenty-four hundred years before our era, and was even then an ancient custom. When Jacob entered into a covenant with Laban, a pillar was set up, surrounded by a heap of stones (Gen. 31:45-53), which was a phallic emblem, and frequently used in the Old Testament. Hebrew patriarchs desired numerous descendants, and hence the symbolic pillar was well suited to their
(131) religious cult.

The name of the reputed father of Abraham, Terah, signifies "a maker of images." In Amos 5: 26 it is said that the Hebrews in the wilderness worshipped a deity known by a name signifying "God of the Pillar," as is shown by the name Baal Tamar, which means the "fructifying god." The Semitic custom of giving sanction to an oath or sacred pledge by what the Hebrews called the "putting of the hand under the thigh" is explained by the Talmudists to be the touching of that part

of the body which is sealed and made holy by circumcision. The translations of the Jewish Scriptures through motives of delicacy are full of these euphemisms. Professor Joseph P. Lesley, in his *Man's Origin and Destiny*, suggests that phallicism converted all the older Arkite symbols into illustrations of its own philosophical conceptions of the mystery of generation, and thus gave to the various parts of the human body those names which constitute the special vocabulary of obscenity of the present day. Every scholar knows it to be a fact that certain words and names now never spoken except by the vulgar abound in the original Jewish writings, and are partly concealed by the convenient methods of euphemism. When Abraham called his servant to take a solemn oath, he required him to lay his hands upon his parts of generation as the most sacred and revered parts of his body (Gen. 24:2), and Jacob, when dying, made his son Joseph take the same form of oath (Gen. 47: 29). This was but little more than the equivalent of the modern custom
(132) of laying the hand upon the heart as a token of sincerity. The proper translation of what the servant of Abraham was required to do is given in the margin of Bagster's *Comprehensive Bible* thus: "In sectione circumcisionis meæ." We have in this form of phallic oath an important suggestion as to the origin, or at least the use, of the words *testimony, testament, testify*, and their cognates (*testis*, a witness), which cannot fail to occur to the learned reader, but which cannot here be fully explained. "*Caute lege*" (read carefully) was a warning of a secret or concealed meaning which esoteric writers anciently put in the margin of their books when they would call the special attention of the initiated to what is now called "reading between the lines." Until our readers comprehend this hint they will not be able to understand what is really meant by the "testimony" mentioned in connection with the "ark of the covenant," as it occurs in Ex. 16: 34, before any laws, or even altars, were known in Sinai or its thunders heard of. In this hint may also be found the true explanation of David's nude dance before the ark, and of the attending circumstances. Scores and scores of proofs could here be furnished from the Old-Testament Scriptures, showing that the use of phallic emblems was the rule rather than the exception for centuries among the Jews; and the idols stolen by Rachel (teraphim) need no longer be misunderstood, nor the meaning of the wedges upon which she sat and refused to rise when the "custom of women was upon her" (Gen. 31:35). She was engaged in an act of devotion. General Forlong
(133) asserts that at this present day Queen Victoria of Christian England rules over more than one hundred millions of phallic worshippers! Indeed, more than half of the population of our globe still worship, as symbols of fertility and fecundity, the genital organs.

A correspondent of the London Times, of April 8, 1875, says: "The Roman Catholic Church still keeps up certain suggestions of phallicism. As the ancient temple or dagoba was the womb or feminine principle of the god Siva or Bod

and others, so the new cardinal, Archbishop Manning, was after his elevation conducted to his church, which is here entitled, in its relation to him, bride or spouse, he calling it *sponsa mea*. The cardinal was called the bridegroom, and the *actual building* (the shrine of St. Gregory) *his* spouse, and not the spiritual Church, which is called Chrises." The *Times*' correspondent further writes of this "sacerdos magnus," as he is termed, going to meet his spouse, the Church: "He stood reverently at the door, when holy water was presented to him and clouds of incense spread around him, to symbolize that, inasmuch as before the bridegroom enters the bride-chamber he washes and is perfumed, so the cardinal, having been espoused to the Church with the putting on of a ring, of his title, holy water and incense were offered to him, when the choir burst forth with the antiphon, 'Ecce sacerdos magnus'—'Behold the great sacerdotal!'"

We are thus assured, as far as this is possible, that the phallic idea and a
(134) phallic faith lie at the base of this creed; and we are reminded of Apis of the Nile entering his palace for his works of sacrifice and mercy—terms applied to the Great Generator or Great Creator. The ancients all taught that their Great One, Manu,* Man, or Noh, was in the great ark which floats in the midst of the waters, and that the whole was a mystery incomprehensible to the uninitiated. He who is lord of the Christian ark is the lord of all nations, which the great sacerdos or pope claims to be. He was till very lately a temporal as well as a spiritual head of kings and nations. So no wonder that the holder of the rod, baton, or banner, who occupies the place also of Moses to lead his flocks through this wilderness, is always examined as to his phallic completeness before being confirmed in the pontificate. This, we read in the life of Leo X. by Roscoe, is required in the case of popes, just as the laws of Moses required that all who came to worship their very phallic JHVH should first prove their completeness as men. From this we may conclude that eunuchs or incompetent men were children of the devil, or at least, not of this phallic god—a fact which the writer of Matt. 19:12, and the Fathers Origen and Valentine, and a host of other saints who acted on this text, must have overlooked. Wm. Roscoe, the historian, thus writes: "On the 11th of August, 1492, after old Roderigo (Borgia) had assumed the name of Alexander VI., and made his entrance as supreme pontiff into the church of St. Peter, after the
(135) procession and pageants had all been gone through, Alexander was taken aside to undergo the final test of his qualifications, which in his particular case might have been dispensed with." The historian of course alludes to his numerous progeny.

The author expects to be criticised, and perhaps charged with obscenity, for introducing this subject. But it has been well said: "Prudery and pruriency are frequently companions, equally impure and cowardly; and in all scientific investigations they should be disregarded rather than conciliated." The ancients saw no impurity in the symbolism of parentage to indicate the work of creation.

What is divine and natural to be and to do cannot be immodest and obscene. No person can with decency and propriety impugn the operation of Nature's laws to which he owes his existence; and he is degraded and corrupt above all others who regards that law as essentially sensual. Phallicism meant no wrong until sensuality and impurity of life suggested that to mention it was indecorous. No clean and chaste mind can be shocked by the most obvious laws of nature. Lydia Maria Child and other grand women have written brave words on this subject which silly prudes would do well to study, if, indeed, they ever read anything beyond a lascivious French novel. Women only expose their ignorance when they are reddened with blushes at the mention of phallic worship, and at the same time wear the mystic horse-shoe or the crescent upon their immaculate bosoms, eat hot cross-buns, dance around the Maypole, and worship beneath the church
(136) steeple. Even the vestments of priests are ornamented with phallic emblems; and one can hardly go abroad without beholding things which show how innocently and unconsciously "the records of the past" are preserved in church architecture, ecclesiastical rites, and many other things daily before our eyes—well understood by really learned men, but to the true origin and significance of which the masses are totally blind. There are churches in Philadelphia, and elsewhere, even among those who call themselves *liberal*, which are ornamented with all the emblems of the ancient Nature-worship, especially sun-worship and phallus-worship. The Women's Christian Temperance Union held a great meeting recently at Ocean Grove, N. J., and innocently used a programme decorated with the horseshoe and many other phallic emblems. They had the cat seated on the crescent, which, according to Egyptian mythology, said, "We are virgins, but nevertheless desire that commerce which eventuates in offspring." They had the emblematic *hare* also, which always denotes *fecundity*, and many other emblems not to be mentioned in polite society. Even our ordinary playing-cards, over which so much precious time is wasted, are distinguished by phallic symbols!

Passing by the symbolism of fire-worship prevalent in nearly all ancient lands, and omitting to notice ancestor-worship, the *worship of the sun*, which embraces nearly all the forms of Nature-worship, now claims our attention. It should
(137) be kept in mind what has already been intimated, that the use of natural objects in worship is not necessarily idolatrous.

The priests of Chaldea, Babylonia, Hindostan, and Egypt disclaimed the actual worship of the material objects prominent in their rituals, and held that these visible signs were necessary for the vulgar to contemplate, while intelligent worshippers fixed their spiritual eyes upon the thing or principle signified by the sign. The Roman Catholic Church well understands this principle, and by its appeal to the ear and eye of uneducated people attracts them to its gorgeous temples and holds them in loyal subjection to the priests. Take the following as an illustration

of the ancient customs referred to:

"Mr. F. Buckland tells us, in *Land and Water*, that on the first of May all the choristers of Magdalen College, Oxford, still meet on the summit of their tower, one hundred and fifty feet high, and sing a Latin hymn as the sun rises, whilst the final peal of ten bells simultaneously welcomes the gracious Apollo. In former days high mass was held here, and the rector of Slymbridge, in Gloucestershire, it appears, still has to pay ten pounds yearly for the one performance of sundry pieces of choir-music at 5 A. M. on the top of this tower. This May music, Christian priests explain, is for the repose of the souls of kings and others, which, of course, is quite an after-thought. Early mass for Sol used also to be held in the college chapel, but it is now explained that, owing to this having been forbidden at the
(138) Reformation, it has since been performed at the top of the tower. After the present hymn is sung by the choristers—boys dressed in womanly raiment—the lads throw down eggs upon the crowd beneath, and blow long loud blasts to Sol through bright new tin horns—showing us that the Bacchic and Jewish trumpet fêtes are not yet forgotten by Christians. Long before daybreak the youths of both sexes used to rise and go to a great distance to gather boughs and flowers, and reach home at sunrise to deck all doors, windows, and loved spots.... Long before man was able to appreciate ploughing and harvesting, he keenly felt the force of the winter and of the vernal equinox, and was ready to appreciate the joyous warmth of the sun and its energizing power on himself, as well as on fruits and flowers."

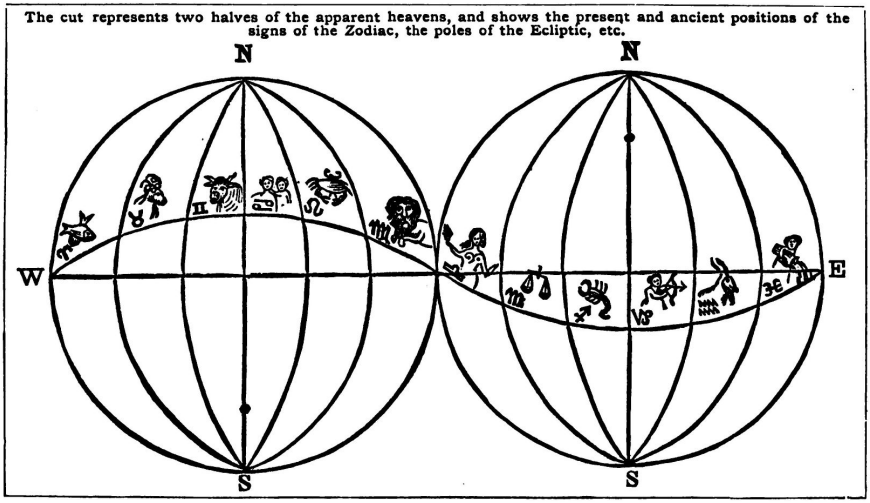
While the Jewish and Christian Bibles contain traces of all forms of the ancient Nature-worship, there is one form that is specially conspicuous from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation—to wit, the worship of the sun.

This form of worship was more general among pagan nations than any other. It was natural for those primitive people, leading pastoral lives in the open air, to fix their attention upon the sun and to notice his relations to other celestial orbs. It was natural for the contemplative and devout to come to regard the sun as the best emblem of the creating, animating, fecundating spirit of the universe, while the ignorant multitude may never have looked beyond the material object.
(139) Those who have read the history of the sun-worshippers of Mexico and Peru, detailed in the great works of Prescott, must have been impressed by the fact that these nations enjoyed a higher prosperity and a purer public morality when they were worshippers of the sun than they have ever enjoyed since under the Roman Catholic religion called Christian.

To fully understand how the astronomical element came to be extensively incorporated into the Jewish and Christian religions, it is absolutely necessary to familiarize ourselves with that ancient pictorial device known as the solar zodiac.

(140)

Zodiac-1


The cut represents two halves of the apparent heavens, and shows the present and ancient positions of the signs of the Zodiac, the poles of the Ecliptic, etc.
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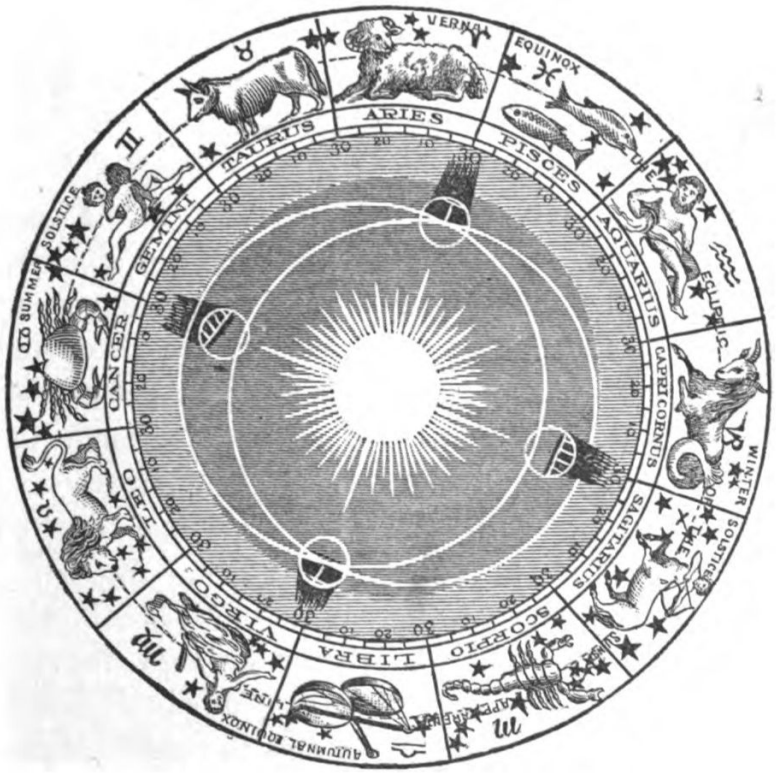
Zodiac-2

This is nothing more than an imaginary belt covering that region of the starry heavens within the bounds of which the apparent motions of the sun, moon, and many other large planets are observed. It is divided into twelve equal parts of thirty degrees each, called "signs," known as "constellations" and designated as follows:

Aries, the Ram or Lamb; Taurus, the Bull; Gemini, the Twins; Cancer, the Crab; Leo, the Lion; Virgo, the Virgin; Libra, the Balance; Scorpio, the Scorpion; Sagittarius, the Archer; Capricornus, the Goat; Aquarius, the Water-carrier; Pisces, the Fishes.

These constellations are filled up with imaginary forms of men, women, animals, monsters, and many fantastic figures, each including a group of stars. In the ancient astronomy these groups numbered thirty-six, to which many modern
(142) additions have been made. Through these constellations passes a wavy line called the Ecliptic, apparently marking the path of the sun, but really indicating the path of our own earth around the sun. The sun seems to move thirty degrees a month, and at the end of the year appears at the point from which he started. We thus have a natural belt or way about sixteen degrees wide extending around the entire heavens, one half the year north, and the other half south, of the equator. But the sun does not cross the equator at the same point each year, so that in crossing he is not always in the same sign. The sun seems to recede, and as the apparent recession of the sun is caused by the real movement of the earth, the phenomenal



THE ZODIAC.

result is the precession of the equinoxes; and as the equinoctial point recedes in a fixed ratio, this point will go back through the whole circle of the constellations in about twenty-five thousand years, requiring about twenty-one hundred and sixty years to pass through each sign. According to the ancient astrology, the sun assumed at different times the character of the particular sign through which it passed, and as such was symbolically worshipped. Four thousand years ago the sign Taurus gave rise to the worship of the Bull (the Egyptian Apis); and when the sun passed into the sign of Aries the Lamb, this emblem dominated the worship of Persians and other sun-worshippers, and so became the paschal or passover lamb of the ancient Hebrews.

(143) You will now begin to see what this zodiacal device has to do with our interpretations of the Bible. The Jewish Scriptures also contain it, and, as will

soon be made to appear, it is impossible to make sense of large portions of the Bible without it.

Many superficial persons imagine this peculiar mapping of the celestial heavens to be a modern fancy, because it is found in modern almanacs and in the maps and charts of modern school-books; but the fact is that it is so old and so universal that it is impossible to ascertain with historical accuracy when and where and how it did originate. There are two ancient zodiacs—one at Esne on the Nile, and one in India—besides two more modern ones at Denderah in Egypt. Sir William Drummond, who wrote in 1811, estimated the age of the one at Esne at about 6500 years; Dupuis made it 1000 years older; while other calculations date the Indian zodiac back 22,875 years, and the Egyptian one 30,100 years. These calculations are based upon the assumption that the signs were in a certain position at certain known times, so that the computation is one of simple mathematical astronomy. The credibility of these calculations is strengthened by the following fact: Upon the coffin of an Egyptian mummy, now in the British Museum, is found a zodiac with the precise indication of the position of the constellations in the year 1722 B. c. Our own Professor Mitchell calculated the exact position of the celestial bodies belonging to our solar system at the time indicated, and found
(144) that on October 7, 1722 B. c., the planets had actually occupied the position in the heavens marked upon the mummy coffin!

But further proofs are superfluous, as the zodiacal designs must be much older than the Bible or they could not have been so frequently used in it.

The Chaldean drama called the book of Job is supposed by some persons to be very ancient, and its author showed his familiarity with the zodiacal constellations when he so sublimely challenged his opponent: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" "Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth?" etc. etc. But can there be any doubt as to the antiquity of the zodiac when there is an honored Protestant doctor of divinity, now living, who holds to the opinion that Enoch, or even Adam himself, invented the zodiac to foreshadow the redemption of fallen man through the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of a veritable God? Martin Luther is said to have thrown his inkstand at the head of the devil. If the lusty old Reformer could now visit this world, he would denounce in unmeasured terms of righteous wrath a man who under the garb of a Lutheran minister could utter such consummate nonsense. And yet we must not forget that Dr. Martin Luther himself denounced Copernicus as an atheist and a fool.

It is the misfortune of the prevalent dogmatic theology that it was formed by people who held the *geocentric* theory—that is, that this little globe is the centre
(145) of the universe. Even now our professional priests seldom extend their thoughts beyond the narrow limits of the planet upon which we dwell. They do not re-

alize that, while the earth travels at the rate of 68,000 miles an hour, Mercury makes 110,000 miles an hour, and that the sun has 1,380,000 times our earth's bulk, and has a diameter of 822,000 miles to our earth's 8000; and that astronomers have some knowledge of a fixed star in the constellation of the Swan which is 62,481,500,000,000 (62 trillions 481 billions 500 millions) of miles from this planet, and that light, which travels from the sun to the earth in eight minutes, would require ten years to reach us from that star. Yet the author of the *Gospel in the Stars* thinks the whole celestial universe was so constructed as to shadow forth the dogmas of petty preachers of modern times! One can only laugh at such fanciful
(146) follies.

CHAPTER VI. ASTRAL KEYS TO BIBLE STORIES

"Therefore they took a key and opened them."—Judg. 3: 25.

IT is the carefully-formed conclusion of many independent thinkers that there is very little real history or biography in the Old-Testament Scriptures. It is a monstrous mistake in modern ministers to take as literal what is, in fact, strictly allegorical. The figurative character of most of the Bible narratives was well known and freely admitted by many ancient writers, Jewish and Christian, as will be shown hereafter.

It would be natural to commence our studies of Hebrew symbolism with the account of the creation and alleged fall of man; but as this dogma is so directly connected with the dogmas of modern sacerdotalism, we reserve the examination of the so-called Mosaic account of Eden and the fall until we are ready to enter upon what is called, in theological parlance, "the redemptive scheme" of Christianity. We say so-called Mosaic account, for there are many reasons for doubting, as I have shown, that he wrote the Pentateuch, should his existence be admitted for the sake of argument. Archbishop Burnet, in speaking of the story
(147) of creation, says: "We receive this history without examination, because it was written by Moses; but if we had found it in the work of a Greek philosopher, a

rabbi, or Mohammedan, our minds would be arrested at every step by doubts and objections. This difference in our judgment does not come from the nature of the facts; it comes from the opinion we have of Moses, whom we believe to be inspired." Here are three assumptions not supported by a particle of evidence, to wit: that such a man as Moses existed, that he was supernaturally inspired, and that he wrote Genesis and other books of the Pentateuch under divine inspiration. Now, we have no account of the real existence of Moses, and no account of what he did and said except from writings accredited to him and the incidental mention of him in the New Testament. His alleged wonderful exploits in Egypt are not mentioned in Egyptian annals nor in any other contemporaneous writings, while many things-said of him in the Old Testament are substantially recorded of many other persons, as already shown.

There are many reasons for believing that Moses was a personification of the sun and his whole history a myth. Observing persons cannot fail to notice that all ancient paintings and statues of Moses represent him with horns, probably originally denoting the rays of the sun when in the constellation Taurus the Bull. The fact is well known that what is called the history of the Jews is mainly fiction, and that, too, borrowed from other peoples and modified to suit circumstances;
(148) and very bungling work have they made of it. The sacerdotalists of the world may be safely challenged to produce anything strictly original from the Old Testament, especially relating to morals. The historian Josephus admits that the Jews "never invented anything useful." Even the writings of Josephus should be received with many grains of allowance. He was himself superstitious and credulous, as shown in his story of a heifer giving birth to a lamb when being led from the temple stable to the altar. Moreover, we have no ancient certified copies of what he did actually write, and there is abundant evidence of alterations and interpolations in his alleged writings by sacerdotalists in modern times. There is no greater imposition palmed off upon the ignorant than the commonly-believed falsehoods that the Jews were a very ancient people and that their Scriptures are the oldest book extant.

We now take up a few Bible stories, and give to them a symbolic instead of an historic interpretation; and for obvious reasons we begin with the alleged progenitor of the Jewish nation, *Abraham.*

It may or may not be a mere coincidence that by transposing the letters of the name Abraham we have the name Brahma—just as in the old legend of the sacrifice of the daughter of Agamemnon, Iphthi-genia, if we divide the syllables into words, Iphthi-geni, we have literally Jephthah's daughter; so, after all, it may be greatly to the credit of Jephthah that the story is fabulous. These curious
(149) coincidences are not here offered as evidence. It is acknowledged, at least by implication, in the Bible itself that the story of Abraham is of Chaldean origin, as his

father Terah was a native of Ur of the Chaldees and the alleged patriarch was a Chaldean. Now, these people were great astronomers in very ancient times, and were accustomed to veil their occult science under just such allegorical personifications and fabulous tales as this of Abraham. Paul, or whoever wrote the Epistle credited to him, lets out the whole secret (Gal. 4: 22-26): "For it is written Abraham had two sons, one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise; *which things are an allegory,*" etc. Now, if you carefully read the apostolic explanation in these verses, you will notice that the two sons of Abraham are two covenants, and the bondmaid Hagar represents an Arabian mountain, which by a magical change becomes the same as the city of Jerusalem. The name Abram signifies the "Father of Elevation," which is the astronomical distinction of the planet Saturn, the exaltation of which, with its devious ways, well represents the alleged history of its prototype. The word *Chasdim*, translated *Chaldees*, literally means *light*, and is a professional not a geographical name, and probably refers to the art of magic and the work of astrologers; so that it is more than probable that Abram was not a person, any more than Chasdim was a place. There are many references in the Scriptures which favor this interpretation, but which cannot here be mentioned. Even in the *Lord's Prayer*, found in Jewish rituals long before the Christian (150) era, there are evidences that it was first addressed to Saturn. There never was any form of religious worship which did not contain an expression equivalent to *Our Father who art in heaven.* Even Jupiter means *Our Father in the sky.*

The name of Abram has many variations, and there is an important sense in which he may be called "the father of many nations." He was the Esrael of the Chaldeans, the Israel of the Phœnicians, as the historian Sanchoniathon distinctly alleges that their name for Saturn was Israel: the names Abraham and Israel are used interchangeably in both the Old and New Testaments, and among the Hindoos, the Greeks, the Persians, and other nations he was the god Saturnus of the whole pagan world. Even upon the dials of our "grandfathers' clocks," cherished in many families as heirlooms in our day, his memory is kept green by the figure of the god of Time. Scores of other similitudes between Saturn and Abraham could here be introduced did space permit. Suffice it to say, Saturn in fable married his own sister, who was a star; and so did Abraham, and the name of his wife signifies a star. Both had many sons, but each had a favorite son, and Saturn called his *Jeoud*, which implies an only son, as Abraham so regarded Isaac. A learned English scholar has suggested that the name "Jeoud" is the real origin of the name "Jew," and he assigns several philological and historical reasons for his (151) theory. It is certain in the minds of many profound and independent investigators that the Jewish tribes originated in Arabia, and were originally a mere religious order, and that their so-called history is largely fabulous, and that their exodus is

a comparatively modern novel with an ancient date, as has been shown.

Let us now take the best-remembered incident in the life of Abraham, the attempted murder and the rescue of his son Isaac, and see what will come of applying the symbolic instead of the literal interpretation to it.

Let it be noted that this is not an original story. The ancient Hindoos have one like it. King Haris-candra had no son. He prayed for one, and promised that if one should be born to him he would sacrifice him to the gods. One was born, and he named him Rohita. One day his father told him of his promise to Varuna to offer him in sacrifice. The son bought a substitute, and when he was about to be immolated he was marvellously rescued. Then there is the well-known similar story written by the Phœnician Sanchoniathon

thirteen hundred years before our era. Then there is the Grecian story of Agamemnon, to whom, when about to sacrifice his daughter, a stag was furnished by a goddess as a substitute. There is another Grecian fable in which a maiden was about to be sacrificed, and as the priest uplifted his knife to shed her blood the victim suddenly disappeared, and a goat of uncommon beauty stood in her place as a substitute. Another story runs thus: In Sparta the maiden Helena was about to be immolated on the altar of the gods, when an eagle carried off the
(152) knife of the priest and laid it upon the neck of a heifer, which was sacrificed in her stead. Similar stories might be produced from among many nations in the most ancient times, long before the Jews picked this up in Babylon and rewrote it, with modifications, so as to apply it to their mythical progenitor; for this fable of Abraham's offering was not written until after their return from their Babylonish captivity—much nearer our own time than is generally suspected.

Regarded as an historic account of a real transaction, this story of the attempted sacrifice of a beloved son by a venerable father is shocking in the extreme, dishonoring alike to God and to Abraham. A good God could not have done such an unnatural and cruel thing. He had no occasion to try Abraham to find out how much faith he had. He knew that already. Regarded as an astrological allegory, it is ingenious and contains a moral lesson, to wit: obedience to the voice of God and the hope of deliverance in the hour of extreme emergency. The defect in the story is, that God could trifle with a loving child, and pretend to require him to break one of his own commandments, "Thou shalt not kill," and subject him to its own penalty, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." It would not have availed Abraham to plead that God told him to murder his son, any more than it availed the Pocasset crank when he pleaded that God had directed him to murder his little daughter. The State of Massachusetts sent the semi-lunatic to
(153) a safe place of confinement. This story of Abraham and Isaac has led to scores and scores of murders of children by their fathers, just as the passage in the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," has been pleaded in justification

of the cool, deliberate murder of multitudes of men, women, and children on the charge of witchcraft.

The literal interpretation of what is called infallible Scripture has been the most bitter curse to deluded, priest-ridden humanity. It is the "stock in trade" of ignorant and selfish ecclesiastics to-day.

Let us look a little more closely at this Abraham-and-Isaac myth. Abraham was the personification of Saturn, the god of Time, while Isaac was the personification of the Sun. Abraham took Isaac up to Hebron—which means *union or alliance*, and clearly indicates a union of the ecliptic and equinoctial line—the very point at which the Ram of the vernal equinox passed by, or, as might be poetically said, was caught in a cloud or bush; so that the whole story was written long ages before in the celestial heavens, and emblazoned in the skies at the return of each vernal equinox. Writers on astro-theology point out details at great length to support the symbolic interpretation, but it is enough for pur purpose to merely give the keynote. Let the fact be specially noted that the names of the patriarchs have an astrological meaning,

and that the twelve sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, have distinctly astrological characters, fully
(154) indicated in Jacob's dying blessing on his sons (Gen. 49) and in the corresponding "Song of Moses" (Deut. 33), on the banner carried by the different tribes in their mythical march from Egypt to Canaan; and that on the breastplate of the officiating high priest the jewels correspond to the celestial signs of the solar zodiac; and although Jacob had children by several different women and was a first-class Mormon, his twelve sons are made to correspond with the twelve months of the year and the twelve signs of the zodiac. This fact is admitted by the orthodox author of *The Gospel in the Stars*. His daughters are not considered worthy of notice, as that would have spoiled the riddle. The philology and etymology of the name *Jacob* has suggestions of the serpent; and from his history he must have been a snaky fellow from the first to the last. He was born with his hand upon his brother's "heel," and he managed to cheat him out of his share of his mother's affections, and lied to his father, and conspired with his mother to rob Esau, his brother, of his "blessing." The stories of Laban and Leah and Rachel all conform to the symbolic rather than the literal hypothesis, as well as Jacob's vision of the ladder, and his wrestling-match with the angel, when he openly obtained the astrological name of the children of Saturn—Israel. It must be admitted that the allegorical hypothesis relieves the patriarchs of the charge of many mean things, such as the heartless manner in which Abram treated Hagar when Sarah got jeal-
(155) ous, and the manner in which he treated Sarah herself when he lied to the king through a selfish cowardice and gave his wife over to the lusts of the monarch Abimelech, who was (or one bearing his name) deceived by Isaac in regard to Re-

bekah by a similar trick (Gen. 26:1). Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was guilty of a meaner and more unmanly act when he himself proposed to give over his two virgin daughters to the worse than beastly lusts of a howling mob, to protect two angels who were guests at his tent (Gen. 19:1-11).

But theologians will never willingly admit that the Abraham of Genesis was a myth. They well know the logical conclusion. They would have to give up the "Abrahamic covenant," which is the basis of sacerdotalism. When Professor Driver, of the orthodox University of Oxford, recently admitted only by implication that Abraham may have had no real personal existence, and claimed that such hypothesis would not be injurious to religion, his article was rejected and suppressed by the editor of an orthodox paper in Philadelphia as dangerous. But to assume that all the principal actors of Genesis and some other books were impersonations, not persons, would not destroy the good things they are alleged to have said and done. It is no more necessary to insist upon the real personality of Abraham than to insist upon the literal existence of Faithful and Great-Heart and other impersonations in *Pilgrim's Progress.* Nobody insists that the characters in the parables accredited to Jesus must be taken in a literal sense. And yet it
(156) may be admitted that the fictions of Scripture may have been suggested by some persons and facts, just as in modern novels there generally is some person who stands for the original of the story. This is eminently so in the novels of Dickens and D'Israeli. Nevertheless, it is difficult to doubt that the principal characters of the Old Testament are mythical, pure and simple, as we find the originals in the older scriptures of different nations, confessedly founded upon the solar and other forms of Nature-worship. The feet is, that the only rational way to explain the marvellous stories of the Hebrew Scriptures is by the well-known methods of ancient symbolism.

Let us now merely glance at some other Old-Testament fables.

Noah and his Deluge are mainly mythical, as this story is almost a literal copy of the Chaldean, though found substantially in the writings of many other nations. It readily fits the allegorical method of interpretation in almost every particular. The Chaldean account as written by Berosus, and found recently by the late George Smith of the British Museum on the clay tablets, is so much like the story in Genesis that the latter must have been copied from the former; and the slight variations in the two narratives are no greater than might have been expected as between Chaldea and Palestine. The Jews obtained it from Babylon, as there is no mention made of this miracle in any book of the Bible written before the Captivity. The books of Psalms, Proverbs, Chronicles, Judges, Kings, etc. are silent
(157) on this subject. Josephus defended the Noachian Deluge on the sole ground that an account of it was held by the Chaldeans, never pretending that the Chaldean account was taken from the Jewish record.

But it is useless to dwell on the story of a universal deluge of water. It is in the light of modern science physically impossible and absurd; and such men as Buckland, Pye Smith, Hugh Miller, and Hitchcock, with many other distinguished Christian scientists, give up the doctrine of a universal deluge while claiming a partial one. And here, again, the ancient astronomy comes in with an explanation of partial floods of waters by the natural results of the "precession of the equinoxes," in which, at certain periods during the change of the polar axis of the earth, great physical convulsions must follow, with wide eruptions of water, making a partial overflow and suggesting the idea of a universal deluge. Four such cataclysms must have occurred while the sun was making one journey through the twelve zodiacal constellations. Prof. Huxley has recently well said: "But the voice of archæology and historical criticism still has to be heard, and it gives forth no uncertain sound. The marvellous recovery of the records of an antiquity far superior to any that can be ascribed to the Pentateuch, which has been effected by the decipherers of cuneiform characters, has put us in possession of a series once more, not of speculations, but of facts, which has a most remarkable bearing upon
(158) the question of the trustworthiness of the narrative of the Flood. It is established that for centuries before the asserted migration of Terah from Ur of the Chaldees (which, according to the orthodox interpreters of the Pentateuch, took place after the year 2000 b. c.) Lower Mesopotamia was the seat of a civilization in which art and science and literature had attained a development formerly unsuspected, or, if there were faint reports of it, treated as fabulous. And it is also no matter of speculation, but a fact, that the libraries of this people contain versions of a long epic poem, one of the twelve books of which tells the story of a deluge which in a number of its leading features corresponds to the story attributed to Berosus, no less than with the story given in Genesis, with curious exactnesss.

"Looking at the convergence of all these lines of evidence leads to the one conclusion—that the story of the Flood in Genesis is merely a version of one of the oldest pieces of purely fictitious literature extant; that whether this is or is not its origin, the events asserted in it to have taken place assuredly never did take place; further, that in point of fact the story in the plain and logically necessary sense of its words has long since been given up by orthodox and conservative commentators of the Established Church."

The only rational interpretation of the extraordinary stories of the Pentateuch and other scriptures is to regard them as mythical and allegorical, borrowed from the astrological systems of more ancient peoples. It is very difficult
(159) to present within the limits here allowed what has grown into ponderous volumes in elucidating the matter in hand.

The story of Jonah and the Fish, taken as a literal story, is incredible, though the notorious Brooklyn preacher thinks that it must be literally true, as that God

might have so diluted the gastric juice in the stomach of the fish as to make Jonah quite indigestible! This whole story is found in earlier pagan writings, and is fully explained by the astronomical phenomena. The earth is a huge fish in the ancient mythology, and on December the 21st the sun (Jonah, the type) sinks into its dark belly, and after three days—to wit, December 25th—it comes forth. The Sun-god is on dry land again.

There is a Hindoo fable much like this. In Grecian fable Hercules was swallowed by a whale at Joppa, and is said to have lain three days in his entrails. The Sun was called *Jona*, as can be shown from many authorities. The nursery-tale of "Little Red Riding-Hood" was also a sun-myth, mutilated in the English story, showing how the *Sun* was devoured by the *Black Wolf* (Night), and came out unhurt. Scores of similar sun-myths could be narrated.

But there are geographical inaccuracies which show its mythical character. Instead of Nineveh being "three days' journey" from the coast where Jonah was vomited out, it is distant some four hundred miles of hill and plain, and the size of the city was not twenty by twelve miles, but more nearly eight by three miles.
(160) Moreover, the city showed no signs of decay till about two hundred and fifty years after the alleged warning of Jonah. It is truly astounding that intelligent men can be so blind. It was recently admitted by high Christian authority that there is not a particle of proof for this story except that Jesus had referred to Jonah as being "three days and nights in the whale's belly." If Jesus did say this, he used it as an illustration. He probably stated a current tradition, if he said it at all.

Let us now try our key in the closet-door of the Samson story.

According to the Bible account, Samson performed twelve principal exploits; and if you will turn to any good dictionary of mythology you will find a wonderful likeness to the twelve labors of Hercules in the Greek myth of the Sun. Time can be taken to examine only one—the cutting off of Samson's hair while reposing in the lap of Delilah, and the consequent loss of his strength. Professor Goldhizer says: "Long locks of hair and a long beard are mythological attributes of the sun."... "When the powerful summer's sun is succeeded by the weak rays of the winter's sun, its strength departs." But as the sun becomes ascendant again he renews his strength, just as Samson's strength returned when his hair grew out again. The seven locks represent the seven planetary worlds. The constellation Virgo represents Samson's wife; and Delilah, in whose lap he dallied and lost his strength, represents the months of autumn, before the winter came to hand him over to the Philistines, the dreary time of the winter months. The story of
(161) Samson is found in the sun-myths of all the Sun-worship-ping nations, and the story of Hercules was known in an island colony of the Phœnicians five hundred years before it was known in Greece; and the story is almost as old as humanity itself. The very name Samson (or Samp-shon) in some languages means the sun;

and there is not an exploit recorded of him that does not yield to the solar interpretation; and when modern ministers undertake to explain how Samson caught three hundred foxes and set fire to their tails, they never think to mention (if they happen to know it) that in the ancient festival of Ceres a fox-hunt was enacted in the theatres of Rome in which burning torches were bound to the foxes' tails. We have an explanation of this from Prof. Steinthal: "This was a symbolical reminder of the damage done to the fields by mildew, called the 'red fox' in the last of April. It was at the time of the *Dog Star* at which the mildew was most to be feared; and if at that time great solar heat followed too close upon the hoar-frost or dew of the cold nights, the mischief raged like a burning fox through the corn-fields. Like the lion, the fox is an animal that indicates the solar heat, being well suited both by its color and long-haired tail." Bou-chart gives a similar explanation and application, and so do many other writers. It remains for ministers of this nineteenth century to dole out the ancient fables of the past as literal history to the grown-up children of to-day. The story of Samson in all its details yields to the
(162) key of ancient symbolism. Why not admit the fact that this is a solar myth, and thus get clear of all the blasphemy and absurdities of a literal interpretation?

The incredibly absurd story of Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still for several hours has a rational explanation, regarded as a myth, well known to initiates to set forth the correction of the calendar, so as to make different periods correspondras one stops a clock to make it agree with the ringing of the standard time by the town bell. There are scores of parallels in ancient history.

Regard Solomon as a sun-myth, and you have no difficulty about the size of his family. The seven hundred wives and the three hundred concubines represented so many stars. Even the narratives of David's exploits with the five kings, his "unpleasantness" with Saul, and his dalliance and intrigue with Bathsheba yield to the astro-mythological key.

The same is true of the story of the two she-bears that ate up the forty-two children who called shorn Elisha "bald-head." The prophet was the Sun, denuded of his curls at a certain astronomical period; the two bears were the constellations *Ursa Major and Ursa Minor*, the great bear and the little bear; and the forty-two children were a group of stars covered by the two bears, so that, figuratively, it might be said they were "eaten up." And yet the late Dr. Nehemiah Adams of Boston once exclaimed: "I believe that the forty-two children who made fun of
(163) the bald head of the prophet of God are now in hell." He once wrote an admirable book entitled *Agnes; or, The Little Key,* but he failed to find the skeleton key to unlock the solar fable of the prophet, the saucy little children, and the voracious bears.

Within the last few months Philadelphia has been the scene of a most imposing ecclesiastical ceremony—the investiture of the Roman Catholic archbishop

with the pallium, a narrow band or sash made from wool grown upon white lambs that had been blessed by the Pope on St. Agnes' Day. We heard the eloquent sermon of the archbishop of New York, and he commenced his plausible discourse by tracing the pallium to the mantle that fell from Elijah upon Elisha, the summer and winter sun, and was worn by him after the translation of Elijah. But we try our skeleton key, and find that Elijah represented the ascending summer sun, and Elisha the sun of autumn; and when Elijah gained the greatest height, of course his lessened rays, well called a "mantle," fell upon the bald-headed man representing the autumn. This is the whole story in plain language, and this is the kind of stuff that ecclesiastical man-millinery is made of. The crowd stared with admiration and wonder, just as children are amused with their doll-babies, who are "sick" or "well," "naughty" or "good," according to the whims of the "little women" who dress and nurse them. There is a doll-baby period in every child's history, and it may be necessary to have a doll-baby period in religion; but it does seem
(164) to some of us that it is about time for full-grown women and men to doff their bibs and aprons, lay aside their doll-babies and other ecclesiastical toys, and act as becomes men and women of full growth. Even Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." It has been well said by a judicious writer: "Intelligent readers, except revelationists, well know that the Hebrew fables are myths which teem with history of a kind, if we can only separate the wheat from the chaff. So also is the story of the Creation in Genesis. We have a very valuable myth, though a purely phallic tale, such as East Indians—and perhaps they only—can thoroughly comprehend.

"We would not seek to detract from the great value of myths, for, besides their own intrinsic worth, these stories also exhibit to us many phases of ancient life and thought. Myths may be regarded as history which we have not yet been able to read. We should not discard as untrue or unhistorical any tale, biblical or other, as implying that it is false and unworthy of consideration. On the contrary, we cannot too earnestly and patiently ponder over every ancient tale, legend, or myth, as they all have some foundation and instructive lesson. Whenever an
(165) important myth has existed an important fact has doubtless been its basis."

CHAPTER VII. THE FABLE OF THE FALL

"And calleth those things which be not as though they were."—Rom. 4:17.

THE prevailing belief of Christendom to-day is, that about six thousand years ago, somewhere in Asia, the Supreme Creator took common clay and moulded it into the form of a man, somewhat as a sculptor forms the model from which the marble statue is to be constructed, and when shaped to his liking he breathed into the clay model the breath of life, and it became a living soul. This miraculous work is believed to have been begun and completed on a particular day; so that in the morning the earth contained not a man, but in the afternoon the full-grown, bearded man stood up in his majesty and assumed supremacy over all living things. This godlike man finding himself lonely, the Creator put him to sleep, and opened his side and took therefrom a rib, out of which he formed a woman, who was to be a companion, a wife, to the man; and from this particular couple have come, by ordinary generation, all the people dwelling upon the
(166) face of the earth. They are said to have been perfect, but, unfortunately for their progeny, this perfection did not long continue. Before they were blest with offspring they lost their Creator's favor by eating fruit from a forbidden tree, and became fearfully demoralized, and, instead of begetting children endowed with their own angelic qualities, they became the unhappy parents of a race of moral monsters, of which we are all degraded and degenerate descendants.

The sacerdotal story of the fall of Adam and Eve is based upon the assumption that it is to be received as literal history, revealed by the Creator and written down in a book by a man specially chosen and plenarily inspired; so that there can be no error or mistake in the record. To question this narrative in its literal sense is most impious, and subjects the doubter to the charge of favoring infidelity.

While persons "professing and calling themselves Christians" cannot agree regarding many things deemed by them matters of vital importance, the fall of man is a matter in which they are fully agreed. The great basic dogma which underlies all modern systems of theology, Romish and Protestant, is the utter depravity of the human race through the fall of Adam, dooming a large majority of the human family to eternal punishment.

How evil came into the world has been the most perplexing problem of the ages. Before it the most gigantic minds have been covered with confusion and paralyzed with doubt. Why sin and suffering should have been permitted, not to
(167) say created, has never been made clear to the human reason by any system of theology, Romish or Protestant. A few years ago Dr. Edward Beecher published a book entitled *The Conflict of Ages*. When reviewed by Dr. Charles Hodge in the *Princeton Review* he entitled his paper "Beecher's Conflict;" but it was rightly

called *The Conflict of Ages*; it was not "Beecher's Conflict," and the explanation given by theology only involves the question in greater doubt and difficulty.

From the first dawning of human reason, even in the mind of inquisitive childhood, questions like these have been revolved, if not formulated: Did not God know, when he made Adam and Eve, that they would fall? Why, then, did he create them? Why did he create a subtle serpent to tempt them? Why did he create a tree the fruit of which was forbidden? Why did he make the possible everlasting ruin of innumerable unborn mortals depend on such a trivial act as the eating of a certain apple? Why did he not destroy Adam and Eve after their first act of disobedience, and thus prevent them from propagating a faithless progeny, which should increase in geometrical progression until the number should be so great as to exhaust calculation with weariness, stagger reason itself, and transcend even the powers of the loftiest imagination to conceive? Why are the teeming millions of the children of Adam held virtually responsible for this single trivial act of disobedience by an unknown remote ancestor myriads of ages ago? How
(168) could all men sin in him and fall with him in the first transgression? How could the guilt of Adam's sin be imputed to his children?

The circumstances connected with the degradation of man are so extraordinary that it is not unreasonable to inquire whether the narrative of the fall is a matter of supernatural revelation based upon an historic occurrence, or whether it is purely mythical, portraying the conceptions of the human mind as to the origin of evil at some remote period of the world's childhood. For the support of the dogma of total depravity through the fall of Adam theologians rely primarily upon the account in the book of Genesis. It is a notable fact that Adam and Eve are not historically recognized in any other portion of the Old Testament, and their very existence was totally ignored by the Teacher of Nazareth, if the Gospels said to contain the only report of his teachings are to be credited. Nobody pretends that Moses, the doubtful author of the Pentateuch, wrote from personal knowledge; but it is claimed that he wrote under inspiration of God, though there is not a single intimation in Genesis or any other book that he was so inspired, or that God had anything more to do with his writings than he had with the writings of Homer, Herodotus, or John Milton. But the assumption that the dogma of the fall through the sin of Adam was first revealed to Moses—at most not more then eight or nine hundred years before the Christian era—is plainly exploded by the fact that this story existed among many nations centuries and centuries before
(169) Moses is said to have been born or the writing called Genesis existed.

It is not within the lines of our general purpose to here give in detail the numerous legends—substantially the same, though differing in particulars—regarding the introduction of sin into this world, found in the writings of Hindoos, Persians, Etruscans, Phœnicians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Egyptians,

Thibetans, and others. Any man who would now dare to deny this statement regarding the prevalence of the story of the fall centuries before the writing of Genesis existed would justly subject himself to the charge of ignorance or dishonesty.

Dr. Inman states that Adam is the Phallus and Eve the Yoni—in other words, that Adam and Eve signify the same idea as Abraham and Sara, Jacob and Leah, man and woman; thus embodying in the Hebrew the Hindoo notion that all things sprang from Mahadeva and his Sacti, my lady Sara. This deduction enables us at once to recognize, as did the early Christians, the mythical character of the account of the fall; and we must conclude that the story means that the male and female lived happily together so long as each was without passion for the other, but that when a union took place between them the woman suffered all the miseries inseparable from pregnancy, and the man had to toil for a family, whereas he had previously only thought of himself. The serpent is the emblem of "desire," indicated by the man and recognized by the woman. "There is a striking resem-
(170) blance between the Hindoo and Hebrew myths. The first tells us that Mahadeva was the primary Being, and from him arose the 'Sacti.' The second makes Adam the original, and Eve the product of his right side—an idea which is readily recognizable in the word *Benjamin.* After the creation, the Egyptian, Vedic, and Jewish stories all place the woman beside a citron or pomegranate tree, or one bearing both fruits; near this is a cobra or asp, the emblem of male desire, because these serpents can inflate or erect themselves at will."

General Forlong thus discourses upon this subject: "Most cosmogonies relate a phallic tale of two individuals Adam and Eve, meeting in a garden of delight (Gan-Eden), and then being seduced by a serpent Ar (Ar-i-man), Hoa, Op, or Orus, to perform the generative act, which it is taught led to sin and trouble, and this long before we hear of a spiritual god or of solar deities. These cosmogonies narrate a contest between man and Nature, in which the former fell, and must ever fall, for the laws of Sol and his seasons none can resist."... "The Jews learned most of their faith and fables from the great peoples of the East; especially did they get the two cosmogonies, and that solar fable, mixed with truth, of a serpent tempting a woman with the fruit of a tree, of course in the fading or autumnal equinox, when only fruit exists and all creation tries to save itself by shielding all the stores of nature from the fierce onslaughts of angry Typhon when entering on his dreary
(171) winter. The Gan-Eden fable was clearly an attempt by Zoroastrians to explain to outsiders the difficult philosophical problem of the origin of man and of good and evil. Mithras, they said—and the Jews followed suit—is the good God, the incarnation of God, who dwells in the beauteous orb of day; to which Christian Jews added that he was born of a virgin in a cave which he illuminated."

"The tree of life mentioned in Gen. 3: 22 certainly appears," says Mr. Smith (Chal. Acct, p. 88), "to correspond to the sacred grove of Anu, which a later fragment of the creation-tablets states was guarded by a sword turning to all the four points of the compass; and there too we have allusions to a thirst for knowledge, having been the cause of man's fall; the gods curse the dragon and Adam for the transgression. This Adam was one of the Zalmat-qaqadi, or dark men, created by Hea or Nin-Si-ku, a name pointing to Hea being a Nin or Creator, while Adam is called Adami or Admi, the present Eastern term for man and the lingam, and no proper name." The impression that I get from the legends of Izdubar, or the Flood, or even the creation-tablets, is simply that these were religious revivals. Nearly every illustration of Mr. Smith's last volume shows the serpent as an evil influence. Now, if I am right—and all I have read elsewhere tends to the same conclusion—then all the tales as to a temptation by a serpent, a fall, are phallo-pythic transmutations of faith, and have no more connection with the first creation of
(172) man upon earth than have the flood, the ark, or mountain-worship of Jews in the desert, or the destruction of Pytho by Apollo in the early days of Delphi, etc.

"The tree and serpent," says Fergusson, "are symbolized in every religious system which the world has known, not excepting the Hebrew and Christian, The two together are typical of the reproductive powers of vegetable and animal life. It is uncertain whether the Jewish tree of life was borrowed from the Egyptians or Chaldeans; but the meaning was in both cases the same, and we know that the Assyrian tree was a life-giving divinity. And Moses, or the writer of Genesis, has represented very much the same in his coiled serpent and love-apples, or citrons, of the tree of life.

"The writer of Genesis probably drew his idea of the two trees, that of life and that of knowledge, from Egyptian and Zoroastrian story; for criticism now assigns a comparatively late date to the writing of the first Pentateuchal book. After Genesis no further notice is taken in the Bible of the tree of knowledge. But that of life, or the tree which gives life, seems several times alluded to, especially in Rev. 2: 7. The lingam or pillar is the Eastern name for the tree which gives life. But when this tree became covered with the inscriptions of all the past ages, as in Egypt, then Toth, the Pillar, came to be called the tree of knowledge."

But it must not be supposed that all Christian theologians of the present day hold the historical and literal truth of the legend of the fall of Adam. In several
(173) of the public libraries of Philadelphia may be found a book entitled *Beginnings of History*, written by a learned professor of Archaeology at the National Library of France—Professor François Lenormant. It was republished by Scribner, New York, in 1886, with an introduction by Francis Brown, associate professor of Biblical Philology in the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary of New York. It is written from a Christian standpoint, and the writer is a firm defender of the

infallibility of the Hebrew Scriptures, and can never be suspected of having any sympathy with modern rationalism. He not only admits that the Edenic story of the introduction of sin, found in Genesis, is a compilation made up from the Shemitic traditions of Babylonians, Phœnicians, and other pagan peoples, but he has covered page after page with proofs of this fact by learned and accurate quotations from their numerous legends. He puts in the common plea of lawyers, known as *confession and avoidance*, and takes the ground that "the writer of the Hebrew Genesis took these fables from floating tradition as he found them, and cleansed them of their impurities, altered their polytheistic tendencies, made them monotheistic, and otherwise so transformed them as to make them fit vehicles of spiritual instruction by the Divine Spirit which inspired him."

This is an ingenious device, but it will hardly satisfy sound thinkers. The question is, whether the story of Adam is historical truth or pagan fiction. The highest scholarship pronounces it fiction, while certain orthodox writers admit
(174) the fact "that God used prevailing but unreal fancies to teach important truths."

The document in which the story of the fall is found is a confused, inconsistent, and absurd compilation by at least two different writers, representing each a different God, Jehovah and Elohim, the writers contradicting each other in many particulars; and this feet is admitted by candid Christian writers, and by none more frankly than the late Dean Stanley of the English Establishment. The first account of creation ends at the third verse of Gen. 2, and the second account begins with the fourth verse and closes with the end of that chapter. In the first account the man and woman are created together on the sixth and last day of creation (Gen. 1:28). In the second account the beasts and birds are created after the creation of the man and before the creation of the woman; and it was not until after Adam had examined and named all the beasts of the fields, and had failed to find among the apes, chimpanzees, and ourangs a suitable companion for himself, that Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs, taken from his primeval anatomy while under the influence of a divine anaesthetic (Gen. 2:7, 8, 15, 22). In the first account man was made on the last day, and woman was made at the same time; in the second account man was made after the plants and herbs, but before fruit trees, beasts, and birds. So it would seem that, inasmuch as woman was made after all things, she was an afterthought, a sort of necessary evil for
(175) the solace and comfort of man. These contradictions run through the whole of the first and second chapters of Genesis, and plainly show that these narratives were compiled by two different persons from vague traditions or from different written documents. Had the Creator undertaken to write or dictate an account of his own work, he certainly would not have contradicted himself six times within the limit of a few lines.

The credibility of the document in which is found the account of the fall is further impaired by the fact that it contains statements openly at variance with the demonstrations of science. It teaches not only that the world was made in six days of twenty-four hours each, but that the whole planetary system was made in a single day. "He made the stars also." The discoveries of modern science have lately driven our sacerdotalists to a new and absurd interpretation of the story of creation by alleging that the six days spoken of were not periods of twenty-four hours each, but six indefinite periods of very long duration. But it would be easy to furnish numerous admissions of orthodox scholars that the six days of the creative week were intended by the writers to describe ordinary days, of twenty-four hours each, and not indefinite periods. Any other interpretation Professor Hitchcock has pronounced "forced and unnatural, and therefore not to be adopted without a very urgent necessity." The venerable Moses Stuart, long professor of Biblical Literature in the Andover Theological Seminary, says: "When the sacred writer in Gen. 1 says the first day, the second day, etc., there can be no possible
(176) doubt—none, I mean, for a philologist, let a geologist think as he may—that a definite day of the week is meant. What puts this beyond all question," the learned theologian adds, "is that the writer says specifically 'the evening and the morning were the first day,' 'the second day,' etc. Now, is an evening and a morning a period of some thousands of years?... If Moses has given us an erroneous account of the creation, so be it. Let it come out and let us have the whole truth." The fact is, that the indefinite-period hypothesis does not, after all the quirks and special pleadings, overcome the difficulty. The question arises, Why six indefinite periods? One indefinite period is as long as six or sixty. There is nothing in geology to indicate six periods. One need only consider the attempt to reconcile Genesis and geology to plainly see that the Mosaic record was intended to be taken in its obvious sense. The forced interpretations put upon the Hebrew story to make it appear to be historical and literal truth make it more absurd than it would otherwise appear. Think of Adam created (according to one account) on the second day, and Eve on the sixth day, and then accept the hypothesis that these creative days represent indefinite periods of thousands, if not millions, of years to each day, so that four indefinite periods of thousands of years passed away before Adam had his Eve to be his helpmeet, and what a long, lonely time he must have had! Then how small the human census must have been for unnumbered ages, and
(177) how strange the fact that the same writer says that Adam "lived nine hundred and thirty years, and he died;" that is to say, he died several hundred thousand years before the rib was taken from his side to make him a wife!

But the fact must be emphasized that it is quite useless to criticise the so-called Mosaic narrative of the fall, because it is acknowledged to be a huge myth or allegory by the best scholarship of modern times. The Christian author of the

Beginnings of History has with profound research actually produced and printed the stories of many ancient peoples in contrast with the narrative in Genesis. He says in the preface to his book: "This is the problem which I have been led to examine in comparing the narrations of the Sacred Book with those current long ages before the time of Moses among nations whose civilization dated back into the remote past, with whom Israel was surrounded, from among whom it came out. As far as I myself am concerned, the conclusion from this study is not doubtful. That which we read in the first chapter of Genesis is not an account dictated by God himself, the possession of which was the exclusive privilege of the chosen people. It is a tradition whose origin is lost in the night of the remotest ages, and which all the great nations of Western Asia possessed in common, with some variations. The very form given it in the Bible is so closely related to that which has been lately discovered in Babylon and Chaldea, it follows so exactly
(178) the same course, that it is quite impossible for me to doubt any longer.

The school of Alexandria in general, and Origen in particular, in the first centuries of the Church interpreted the first chapters of Genesis in the allegorical sense; in the sixteenth century the great Cardinal Cajetan revived this system, and, bold as it may appear, it has never been the object of any ecclesiastical censure."

It is well understood among men of learning that the whole story of Eden, the talking serpent, and the sinning woman is a myth, and that all nations of sun-worshippers have had substantially the same legend, and their priests, poets, and philosophers have not hesitated to acknowledge among themselves its fabulous character. That early Jewish and Christian writers freely admitted the allegorical character of the narrative ascribed to Moses is well known. Maimonides, a learned Jewish rabbi, said: "One ought not to understand nor take according to the letter that which is written in the Book of the Creation, nor have the ideas concerning it that most men have, otherwise our ancient sages would not have recommended us to carefully conceal the sense of it, and on no account to raise the allegorical veil which conceals the truth it contains. Taken according to the letter, this work gives the most absurd and extravagant idea of divinity. Whoever shall discover the true sense of it ought to be careful not to divulge it." Philo, the great Jewish authority, took the same ground, and wrote mainly to show the
(179) allegorical character of all the sacred books. Josephus held similar views, and so did Papias and many of the early Christian Fathers. Origen said: "What man of good sense will ever persuade himself that there was a first, second, and a third day, and that these days had each their morning and evening without the not-yet-existing sun, moon, and stars? What man sufficiently simple to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, planted a garden in the East—that the 'tree of life' was a real tree, evident to the senses, whose fruit had the virtue of preserving

life?" etc. St. Augustine held the same views as to the allegorical character of the so-called Mosaic account of the creation and fall, and so did Tertullian, Clement, and Ambrose. Some of the early Christian authorities carried this idea of the allegorical character of the Scriptures so far as to apply it to the Gospels themselves. "There are things therein" (said Origen) "which, taken in their literal sense, are mere falsities and lies;" and St. Gregory asserted of the letter of Scripture that "it is not only dead, but deadly;" while Athanasius admonished us that "should we understand Sacred Writ according to the letter we should fall into the most enormous blasphemies." It seems to have been fully realized in early times that there was no rational way to interpret Moses and his writings but upon the allegorical hypothesis. As the Mosaic account of the creation and the fall of man is so evidently the same story that was suggested to the Persians and other nations by the astronomical phenomena, we are forced to the conclusion that this is the
(180) only key to unlock the mysteries of the first three chapters of Genesis. If the original story is known to have been founded upon the ancient astrological religion, the substantial copy in our Jewish Scriptures must have the same basis. All the ancient religions had their *Cabala*—secret words and initiations—and the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are no exceptions, as is seen upon their very surface. We may not have all their secrets—some of them may not be proper things to write about in our day—but no fair man of intelligence can successfully deny that many of those things which are absurd if taken for historical truth are at once explained by reference to the solar cults of the ancients.

Many theologians have virtually admitted that there is nothing injurious to the interests of true religion in the hypothesis here presented, but, on the contrary, there is much that is truly beautiful and calculated to elevate and inspire the devout mind. Even the distinguished Albertus, of the twelfth Christian century, surnamed *the Great* for his attainments as a scholastic ecclesiastic, did not hesitate to write: "All the mysteries of the incarnation of our Saviour Christ, and all the circumstances of his marvellous life from his conception to his ascension, are to be traced out in the constellations and are figured in the stars." "The Gospel in the Stars" was the significant advertisement of a course of sermons recently delivered in a prominent Lutheran church in Philadelphia by a learned doctor of
(181) divinity, and, though many of his hearers thought that the title should have been "The Stars in the Gospel," it was certainly an evidence of progress and increasing light to have a frank admission from such a source that all the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the Reformation were prefigured in the celestial heavens and illustrated in the constellations of the solar zodiac.

This author admits the identity between the tenets of the astro-theology of ancient sun-worshippers and the present dominant theology of Christendom, but assumes that the original construction of the celestial heavens and its fanciful

division into constellations had reference to, and in fact prefigured, what was literally fulfilled in Christianity. He finds in the solar zodiac of Esne in Egypt as clear predictions of the coming of Christ as he finds in Isaiah or any other Jewish prophet. Thus, he "gives away" the whole argument, and unwittingly admits the natural origin of all the distinctive tenets of modern dogmatic theology. This last craze may well be regarded as a compound of scientific trifling and theological, moonshine.

But it is said by theologians that man is depraved, and that the present moral status of humanity confirms the dogma of total depravity by descent through fallen and depraved ancestors. This involves the question, What is depravity?

That man is not perfect in morality is as true as that he is not perfect in body nor in mentality. But does not every one know by his own experience and
(182) observation that human shortcomings mainly arise from a want of perfect development and the influence of environment, rather than from essential, innate viciousness? What is called "sin" should be known as "undevelopment," and, as real as is the law of heredity, it is no more real than the law of environment. Where there is evidence of hereditary evil tendencies it is not necessary to go back more than two or three generations to find the source.

But the fact must here be emphasized and continually kept in mind that the story of Eden and the fall is substantially found in the annals of many nations anterior to the existence of the Jewish tribes, varied only in trivial matters. The story of the serpent in Eden is probably of Aryan source, to which the conception of the satanic origin of evil was attached after the Jews came into close contact with Persian dualistic ideas. To doubt which was the original and which the copy, shows, regarding the well-established facts of history, a want of information so great as to make argument on this matter quite useless.

The conclusion is inevitable that if the fall of Adam is a fiction, then the entire system of evangelical theology is based upon a fiction; and the fruit must be natural to the tree—a fictitious tree can only bear fictitious fruit. Orthodox theologians, especially of the logical Presbyterian stamp, realize that if they give up Adam and Eve as progenitors of the entire human race, they give up the very foundation-stones of the "redemptive scheme." This accounts for Presbyterian op-
(183) position to the doctrine of evolution. They are logical enough to see that the second Adam as a Saviour in the evangelical sense must share the fate of the first Adam; and so Professor Woodrow of South Carolina has recently been degraded on account of his theory of evolution.

The world moves, and, as Professor Marsh of Yale College has well said, "The doctrine of evolution is as thoroughly demonstrated as the Copernican system of astronomy."

In the *Popular Science Monthly* for October, 1890, we have a very able article from Andrew D. White, LL.D., ex-president of Cornell University, showing how completely science contradicts theology in regard to the Edenic story. He shows that the tendency of the race has always been upward from low beginnings. He further shows that Archbishop Whately and the Duke of Argyll championed the Bible story, but were so conclusively answered by Sir John Lubbock and Tylor that the views of the archbishop were seen to be untenable, while the duke, as an honest man and a sound thinker, was obliged to give up his former views and adopt the scientific theory. The light thrown upon this subject by Herbert Spencer, Buckle, Max Müller, and scores of other great scholars is among the glories of the century now ending. The public declaration of the celebrated Von Martius, of his
(184) conversion to the scientific view of the story of the Fall, ought to make smaller men less confident of their views on a subject they have never studied.

In 1875, Commodore Vanderbilt endowed a university in Tennessee, and it was put in charge of the Methodists. Dr. Alexander Winchell was called to the chair of Geology. He was distinguished in his specialty by his successful labors in another university. He openly taught "that man existed before the period assigned to Adam, and that all the human race could not have descended from Adam." The Methodist bishop told him "that such views were contrary to the plan of redemption." The Methodist Conference resolved "that they would have no more of this," and Professor Winchell was summarily dismissed from the chair, and the position, with its salary, assigned to another. The State University of Michigan recalled him to his former chair in that institution, where he could teach *science* regardless of the impotent thunders of *theology*.

The fall of Adam is really the pivotal principle in dogmatic theology of the orthodox variety. If the entire human race are not descendants of a real, genuine, historical pair miraculously created (a pair almost divine in perfections), and who by disobedience fell from their high estate, and by their federal or representative character involved all their countless descendants by natural generation and descent in the same ruin,—if these things are not true, then what is called the evangelical scheme is based upon a fiction, and is to be so treated, regardless of
(185) the effect upon other theological doctrines. The dogma of a sudden, special creation of a perfect man is not sustained by the facts of history nor the science of palaeontology. Scientific investigators find man, so far as the evidence of his remote existence can be traced, very nearly allied to apes; and there is abundant evidence to show that man has been improving in every respect as years and cycles of years have rolled away. It is thus absolutely demonstrated that the history of our race shows the rise or ascent of man from a very low estate, instead of his "fall" from a condition of high perfection.

But it does not follow, because man as we first find him was very much like the anthropoid ape, that he is a lineal descendant of the ape. The more rational hypothesis is, that both apes and man were evolved from still lower animal forms by divergent lines, so that there is a relation of a very distant cousinship existing between them. There is many a fool-born jest about man and the monkey, oft repeated by *adcaptandum*

theologians who have never read Darwin's *Origin of Species* nor his *Descent of Man*, and who therefore do not know that there is nothing in these writings to justify such caricatures.

The fact is, the evolution of man by slow and long-continued processes, instead of his sudden miraculous creation on a certain day, is now as well established as the law of gravitation, in the judgment of scientists who are not hampered and blinded by preconceived theological dogmas. It cannot be denied that the weight
(186) of scientific testimony is very largely in favor of the *development* of man, instead of a miraculous and complete creation at a particular period of time. The true ground will be found to be *creation by evolution*; and if our purblind sacerdotalists had accepted this doctrine, as the brightest of them have privately done, they would have saved themselves the disgrace of becoming the laughing-stock of the scientific world. If man was brought to his present high estate by a system of evolution, it is no less the work of the Supreme Creator of the universe than if he had been made from clay in an instant of time; and if the character of man, mentally and morally, is admitted to be based on the degree of his development, it would solve many a knotty question in theology and morals. At any rate, the evolution hypothesis has many advantages over the Church dogma, manifestly founded on a pagan fable. The fact is, sacerdotalists have always been their own worst enemies, and have always been defeated in their battles with science and a true philosophy.

It is not intended to ignore the fact that legends of a paradisiacal period, a real "golden age," are found among all ancient peoples, also of periods of general demoralization; but these legends can easily be accounted for. It is a natural instinct in man to praise the past, and to think that "the former times were better than the present." We see this among aged men and women to-day. Then it is well known that the stream of human history has never run in an unbroken channel.
(187) Our race has ever had its "ups and downs," and, comparatively speaking, mankind has had many *falls* and *ascents*, while the general or ultimate tendency and result have been ascending higher and higher. Moreover, the golden age of Adam in Eden must have been very short, according to the fable of Genesis, as the fall occurred before he had any children. What a pity that Adam and Eve could not have maintained their innocence by blind obedience until at least a son and daughter could have been born to them! This may be considered irreverent, but everybody

knows that, outside of the pulpit and the Sun-day-school, the story of Adam and Eve is hardly ever mentioned except as a huge joke, and that witty preachers often take part in laughing at it. It is difficult to write about a fiction otherwise than facetiously.

I cannot refrain from again quoting Professor Huxley in summing up my own conclusions in regard to this matter:

"I am fairly at a loss to comprehend how any one for a moment can doubt that Christian theology must stand or fall with the historical trustworthiness of the Jewish Scriptures. The very conception of the Messiah, or Christ, is inextricably interwoven with Jewish history. The identification of Jesus of Nazareth with that Messiah rests upon the interpretation of passages of the Hebrew Scriptures which have no evidential value unless they possess the historical character assigned to them. If the covenant with Abraham was not made; if circumcision and
(188) sacrifices were not ordained by Jehovah; if the 'ten words' were not written by God's hand on the stone tables; if Abraham is more or less a mythical hero, such as Theseus; the story of the deluge a fiction; that of the fall a legend; that of the creation the dream of a seer,—if all these definite and detailed narratives of apparently real events have no more value as history than the stories of the regal period of Rome, what is to be said of the Messianic doctrine which is so much less clearly enunciated? And what about the authority of the writers of the books of the New Testament, who on this theory have not merely accepted flimsy fictions for solid truths, but have built the very foundations of Christian dogma upon legends and quicksands?

"The antagonism between natural knowledge and the Pentateuch would be as great if the speculations of our time had never been heard of. It arises out of contradictions upon matters of fact. The books of ecclesiastical authority declare that certain events happened in a certain fashion; the books of scientific authority say they did not."

"What we are pleased to call religion now-a-days is for the most part Hellenized Judaism; and, not un-frequently, the Hellenic element carries with it a mighty remnant of old-world paganism and a great infusion of the worst and weakest products of Greek scientific speculation; while fragments of Persian and Babylonian—or rather Accadian—mythology burden the Judaic contribution to the common stock. The antagonism of Science is not to Religion, but to the hea-
(189) then survivals and the bad philosophy under which Religion herself is wellnigh crushed. Now, for my part, I trust this antagonism will never cease, but that to the end of time true Science will continue to fulfil one of her most beneficent functions, that of relieving men from the burden of false Science which is imposed upon them in the name of Religion."

The fact that well-dressed congregations do not laugh sacerdotalists to scorn shows how safe it is to rely upon the credulity and indifference of those who have been taught mere myths as real history from early childhood. The day will come when even children will laugh in the faces of priests when they seriously speak of the fall of Adam and Eve as a matter of actual occurrence. The great curse of true religion to-day is *literalism*, enforced by priestcraft, in regard to what relates to our most sacred concerns.

It is no part of our design to here explain the development theory as to how man did originate from the lower forms of animal existence, but must refer those who are willing to learn to such works as Darwin's *Origin of Species and Descent of Man*, Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature*, and to scores of other books accessible to all. Perhaps ninety-nine-hundredths of living working scientists repudiate the Adam-and-Eve story, and regard it as a fable intended to illustrate what man's attainments at the time would not enable him to account for on natural principles.

CHAPTER VIII. SEARCH FOR THE "LAST ADAM"

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."...

"And so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."—1 Cob. 15: 22-45.

THE claim of sacerdotalism is substantially as follows: Adam was the first man and the sole progenitor of the entire human race. When he fell, all his progeny "sinned in him and fell with him in the first transgression." Death was first introduced in the world by Adam's sin, and life is restored by Christ. Adam and Christ are the two great representatives of death and life, of the fell and the restoration. The Creator permitted this great calamity to happen, having purposed from all eternity to redeem this degenerate race, or at least a portion of it, from the terrible curse caused by Adam's sin. In due time he did incarnate himself, became man, human flesh and blood, by impregnating, or "overshadowing,"

a Jewish virgin, and so was born, by ordinary generation, a human babe in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was called the Christ. After about thirty years this human-born God died to make it possible to restore our race to its original moral status. This is called the "redemptive scheme," and is the sum and substance
(191) of Christianity, and is fully set forth in what is very improperly called the "Apostles' Creed," which is publicly recited in thousands of churches every Sunday as an epitome of their belief.

The story of this one first man, who sinned by eating an apple from a certain forbidden tree, has been proved to be a *fable, a myth, an allegory*. The legend may shadow forth certain natural truths, but it is nevertheless a myth. The thing never occurred. The alleged facts are not facts. There was no first Adam. There may have been some one whom certain persons called the last Adam, but it is nevertheless true that what is said of him was founded upon an *unreality*—a thing which never happened. According to biblical chronology, the last Adam did not make his advent until about four thousand years after the first Adam fell, Even this seems to have been a long period to wait, but if we accept the interpretation of certain modern writers, that which is called "the beginning" in Genesis may have been forty thousand or four hundred thousand years before the advent of Jesus. True, this would show certain events to have been a very long way apart (for instance, the creation of Eve after that of Adam) and would make the work of Christ in the "redemptive act" occur ages and ages after the mischief was done.

It is contended that the promise of the sending of a Saviour was made the
(192) very day that the first Adam sinned, and that the salvation of the sinner was conditioned upon man's faith in, and acceptance of, the promise that in due time, not mentioned, the last Adam should come and repair all the mischief which the first Adam had caused. It is claimed by sacerdotalists that the saying in Genesis 3: 15 is the first promise of a Redeemer: "And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." But these very words occur in the pagan fables that were written long before the time that I Genesis was written, and in some of these fables, much more consistently with the passage above quoted, the woman is represented as standing with her heel on the serpent's head. Then it is claimed that the Creator accepted the sacrifice of Abel because it was a *bloody* sacrifice, prefiguring the shedding of the *blood* of

Christ, and that he rejected the offering of Cain because there was no *blood* in it. We have looked in vain through the Old-Testament Scriptures for a promise of the *last* Adam who was to come and redeem man, but have failed to find it. A system of "redemption" that is based on expressions so enigmatical must have a very flimsy foundation upon which to stand. It is like the assumption that women generally have an aversion to reptiles because a serpent tempted Eve and brought

so many curses on the sex. To such miserable subterfuges will sacerdotalists resort to maintain a theory.

One of the first points emphasized in connection with the advent of Jesus is the claim that it was *in [pg 193] exact fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy*. Certain orthodox Christian writers claim that there are *two hundred* prophecies in the Old Testament relating to Jesus, while certain other eminent German and English Christian scholars deny that there is even one prophecy which does not admit of another and a more rational explanation. The quotations from Old-Testament prophecies in the Gospels are, to say the least, unfortunate, and rather suggest the hypothesis that certain things, if done at all, were done to make the history fit the prediction.

Learned Bible critics contend that there is not to be found a single example of such redemptive prophecy, even though the theory of the double sense of prophecy be admitted. These predictions or hopes were intended to apply to eminent characters in Hebrew history as *deliverers*, and can only be applied to Jesus by a *forced and unnatural* construction; and, though Cyrus and others appeared, the expectations of the Jews have not yet been realized, and some of them are still awaiting *their* Messiah, spurning the idea that the predictions of their prophets were fulfilled in the humble Man of Nazareth.

One or two examples of so-called Messianic prophecies must suffice. Matthew (27: 9) says the prophecy of "Jeremy the prophet" regarding the thirty pieces of silver was fulfilled in the betrayal of Jesus; whereas no such prophecy is found in Jeremiah, and, though similar words occur in Zechariah, they have
(194) another obvious application. Then in Matthew (chap. 2) Hosea is quoted to prove that Jesus dwelt in Egypt to fulfil a prophecy, whereas it is evident (Hos. 11:1) that it was of Israel, not Jesus, that those words were spoken. Again, in Matt. 22:41 the quotation from the Psalms is obviously misapplied—"The Lord said unto my lord," etc.—as it was not written by David, but Nathan addressed it to David. It was the poet that called David *lord*, which spoils the prophecy and ruins the argument of the evangelist. Many things recorded in the New Testament are unwittingly admitted to have been done to fulfil a supposed prophecy—"that it might be fulfilled." There is one very amusing example of an attempt to fulfil an alleged prophecy—that of Jesus dwelling in Nazareth, because it had been prophesied that he should be called a Naz-arene, no such prophecy ever having been uttered.

The Indian Yedas are full of alleged prophecies relating to coming incarnations, and so are the Chinese sacred books. Even Zoroaster, who lived 570 years b. c., prophesied; "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and a star shall appear blazing at midday to announce his appearance. When you behold the star (said he), follow it whithersoever it leads you. Adore the mysterious child, offering him gifts with profound humility. He is indeed the Almighty Word which created the

heavens. He is indeed your Lord and everlasting King" (*History of Idolatry*, Faber, vol. ii. p. 92). It was believed that this prophecy was fulfilled by the advent of the Persian god *Sosia*. It was common among the ancients to presage the birth of
(195) a god by the appearance of a mysterious star, and for astronomers to hasten to adore the new-born deity and present him gifts. Greece, Rome, Arabia, and even Mexico, were all familiar with *Messianic* prophecies. Bishop Hawes says that "the idea that God should in some extraordinary manner visit and dwell with men is found in a thousand forms among ancient heathens."

The fact is, there is no promise or prophecy of a "last Adam" in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Jews give a very different interpretation to those utterances alleged to be Messianic, and the alleged types of Jesus in the Old Testament are purely fanciful, and many of them are exceedingly childish. The idea that Solomon and Moses and the scapegoat were *types* of Jesus is simply absurd, and not creditable to the alleged antetype. There is no Jesus of Nazareth in the Hebrew oracles.

The bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament were antedated by heathen nations centuries before the Jews. The sacrificing of brute beasts was heathenism pure and simple, to conciliate an imaginary anthropomorphic god. Twenty generations of innocent animals slaughtered by divine command in order to notify the world beforehand of the coming of the last Adam, yet never saying so, seem to have failed to prepare the people for the alleged spiritual sacrifice of Jesus. It was a signal failure. If these bloody offerings were types of Jesus, there must have been some resemblance. Wherein did it lie? A bullock was forced to the altar; he
(196) died like any beast at the shambles. It made the sanctuary a slaughter-house. The involuntary offering of an innocent lamb or pigeon cannot be a type of a willing offering of a human being. The whole scheme of bloody animal sacrifices is a type of nothing but the cruelty of barbarism, and meant a good dinner and fat priests! It is generally condemned by the Hebrew prophets as useless, and was entirely rejected by those who "professed and called themselves Christians."

Since we can learn absolutely nothing that is rationally reliable concerning the "last Adam" from the Old Testament, it becomes necessary for us to consult comparatively modern history. The advent of Jesus was made, if made at all within the historic period, scarcely nineteen hundred years ago. If such a person appeared among men at that time, there must be some written record of so wonderful an event by contemporary parties.

In the Jewish Talmud, a perfect wilderness of religious and secular speculations, we find many spiteful and distorted allusions to one Jesus who went into Egypt and learned sorcery and magic, and by such influence raised a tumult among the people and led away a party of deluded followers. Whether this was Jesus of Nazareth it is impossible to say. There were many persons bearing similar names.

There is at the present day much ignorance—or at least indifference—even among intelligent Christians, to the fact that the very name of Jesus is not of
(197) Hebrew, but of Greek origin, as indeed is the whole history of his life as related in the four Gospels; and no one but those who have a previous theory to uphold can believe that the people of Jerusalem during the time of Christ spoke any other language than that spoken by their forefathers. From this we will pass to other instances where the name of Jesus is applied to others not named in the Gospels; and it will be a matter of surprise to many to know that no less than fifteen, most of them living at the time of the Christian era, are named by the Jewish historian Josephus as bearing the name of Jesus:

1. Jesus, son of Josedek (Ant., xi. iii. 10, iv. 1).
2. Jesus, sumamed Jason, son of Simon (Ant., xi. iii. 10, iv. 1).
3. Jesus, son of Phabet (Ant., xv. ix. 3).
4. Jesus, son of Sie (Ant., xvii. xiii. 1).
5. Jesus, son of Damneus (Ant., xx. ix. 1).
6. Jesus, son of Gamaliel (Ant., xx. ix. 4).
7. Jesus, son of Sapphias (Wars, ii. xx. 4).
8. Jesus, son of Shaphat (Wars, iii. ix. 7).
9. Jesus, son of Ananus (Wars, iv. iv. 9).
10. Jesus, son of Ananus, a plebeian (Wars, vi. v. 3).
11. Jesus, son of Gamala (Life, 38, 41).
12. Jesus, a high priest (Wars, vi. ii. 2).
13. Jesus, son of Thebuthi (Wars, vi. viii. 3).
14. Jesus, father of Elymas.
15. Jesus, surnamed Barabbas.

Josephus also refers to one Judas, a Gaulonite, who was a leader of the people,
(198) and whose character and career answer in so many respects to qualities credited to Jesus of Nazareth that it is supposed by many that the name Jesus had been changed to Judas; and he also refers to other Jesuses who are too much like the

traditional Jesus of the Gospels in many things to be mere coincidences. Then there was the *meek* Jesus, mentioned by Josephus, who lived during the reign of Albinus, who prophesied such evil things, and who was scourged until his bones were laid bare, and who uttered no reply, and in so many ways was like the Jesus of tradition (*Wars of the Jews*, book vi., chap. 5). Then we have the mention of the Jesus, as is well known, who was the friend of Simon and John and the "son of Sapphias," who was the leader of a seditious tumult, *who was betrayed by one of his followers*, and defeated by Josephus himself when he was governor of Galilee, and put to shame and confusion (*Life of Josephus*, sec. 12-14).

This undoubtedly shows that nearly all that is claimed for Jesus of Nazareth *might* have been said as the substance of what was written by Josephus concerning real historical persons called Jesus. This may account for the conglomerate character and the many inconsistencies ascribed to this Jesus of tradition.

The failure of Jewish writers of the first century to recognize Jesus of Nazareth, even in the most casual way, is a significant fact. Philo, the celebrated writer of his day, was born about twenty years before the Christian era, and spent
(199) his time in philosophical studies at that centre of learning, Alexandria in Egypt. He labored diligently and wrote voluminously to reconcile the teachings of Plato with the writings of the Old Testament, and, though in the prime and vigor of manhood when Jesus is said to have lived, and dwelling in the immediate vicinity of Judea, and in the very city where Christianity was early introduced, yet this learned, devout, and honest Jew makes no mention of Jesus of Nazareth.

Even more strange is the silence of Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was born about A. d. 35, and lived and wrote extensively until after the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet he never mentioned the name of Jesus. The celebrated passage regarding Christ is known to be a forgery, and the one respecting "James the brother of Jesus, called the Christ," is by no means worthy of confidence. It must be certain that in the first century of our era Jesus of Nazareth did not attract the attention of these fair and distinguished Jewish writers, if he in fact existed.

In early times the name Jesus, as has been shown, was as common as the names John or James, and when the name is mentioned it is impossible to say who is referred to. The passage in Josephus referring to Jesus thus, "About this time appeared Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be right to call him a man," etc., is acknowledged by celebrated Christian writers to be a fraud. Its authenticity was given up as long ago as the time of Dr. Nathaniel Lardner, author of the *Credibil-*
(200) *ity of the Gospel History*, and one of the most highly regarded of Christian writers. Gibbon, too, decided it to be a forgery. Bishop Warburton, the distinguished defender of Pope's *Essay on Man* against the charge of atheism, and one of the most distinguished of Christian defenders, agreed with Lardner. The Rev. Robert Taylor quotes many other Christian writers as coinciding. The biographer of Jose-

phus in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says the passage is unanimously regarded as spurious. Drs. Oort, Hookyaas, and Xuenen, German Christian writers of great repute, in the *Bible for Learners* declare the passage to be "certainly spurious" and "inserted by a later and a Christian hand."

Gibbon says it was forged between the time of Origen (a. d. 230) and Eusebius (a. d. 315). The credit of the forgery, however, is generally given to Eusebius, who first quoted it. The distinguished authors of the *Bible for Learners* distinctly state that Josephus never mentioned Jesus, and cite Josephus's close following of the atrocious career of Herod up to the very last moments of his life, without mentioning the slaughter of the innocents, as indubitable proof that Josephus knew nothing of Jesus. Dr. Lardner gives these reasons why he regards the passage as a forgery:

"I do not perceive that we at all want the suspected testimony to Jesus, which was never quoted by any of our Christian ancestors before Eusebius.

"Nor do I recollect that Josephus has anywhere mentioned the name or word
(201) *Christ* in any of his works, except the testimony above mentioned and the passage concerning James, the Lord's brother.

"It interrupts the narrative.

"The language is quite Christian.

"It is not quoted by Chrysostom, though he often refers to Josephus, and could not have omitted quoting it had it been in the text.

"It is not quoted by Photius, though he has three articles concerning Josephus.

"Under the article 'Justus of Tiberias, this author (Photius) expressly states that the historian (Josephus), being a Jew, has not taken the least notice of Christ.

"Neither Justin in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, nor Clemens Alexandrinus, who made so many extracts from Christian authors, nor Origen against Celsus, have ever mentioned this testimony.

"But, on the contrary, in chapter xxxv. of the first book of that work, Origen openly affirms that Josephus, who had mentioned John the Baptist, did not acknowledge Christ."

The Rev. Dr. Giles, author of the *Christian Records*, adds to the reasons for rejecting the passage, as follows:

"Those who are best acquainted with the character of Josephus and the style of his writings have no hesitation in condemning this passage as a forgery interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian, who was scandalized that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the Gospels or of Christ their subject. But the zeal of the interpolator has out-
(202) run his discretion, for we might as well expect to gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles as to find this notice of Christ among the Judaizing writings of

Josephus. It is well known that this author was a zealous Jew, devoted to the laws of Moses and the traditions of his countrymen. How, then, could he have written that *Jesus was the Christ?* Such an admission would have proved him to be a Christian himself, in which case the passage under consideration, too long for a Jew, would have been far too short for a believer in the new religion; and thus the passage stands forth, like an ill-set jewel, contrasting most inharmoniously with everything around it. If it had been genuine, we might be sure that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom would have quoted it in their controversies with the Jews, and that Origen or Photius would have mentioned it. But Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian (i. 11), is the first who quotes it, and our reliance on the judgment, or even honesty, of this writer is not so great as to allow our considering everything found in his works as undoubtedly genuine."

Oxley in his great work 011 Egypt says: "However, I have found in some papers that this discourse *was not written by Josephus, but by one Caius, a presbyter.*"

Here, according to their own showing, what had passed for centuries as the work of Josephus was a fraud perpetrated by a dignitary of the Church. This is in perfect keeping with ancient custom. In addition to all this, there is not an
(203) original manuscript of Josephus in existence, nor one (that I have heard of) that dates farther back than the tenth or eleventh century A. D.

Another forged reference to Christ is found in the *Antiquities*, book xx. chapter ix. section 1, where Josephus is made to speak of James, "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ." Some theologians who reject the longer reference to Jesus accept this as genuine. But they do it without reconciling the discrepancies between the stories regarding the end of this same James. According to this passage, James was put to death under the order of the high priest. But according to Hegesippus, a converted Jew who wrote a history of the Christian Church about A. d. 170, James was killed in a tumult, not by sentence of a court. Clement of Alexandria confirms this, and is quoted by Eusebius accordingly. Eusebius also quotes the line from Josephus without noticing that the two do not agree. The statement is quoted in various ways in the early writers, and the conclusion is irresistible that the copies of Josephus were tampered with by copyists. Even had Jesus lived and taught as described in the Gospels, Josephus, an orthodox Jew, a priest, and conservative government official, would never have given him the title of Christ, or Messiah, a party leader for whom the Jews were looking to free them from their Roman bondage.

Among the great pagan writers of the first century of our era we find abso-
(204) lutely nothing relating to Jesus of Nazareth. There was Seneca, living not far from these times, and then the Elder and the Younger Pliny, Tacitus, Plutarch, Galen, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus—some of the noblest men of the world. Let us look at some few fragments of testimony that we have. One historian writes that "un-

der a ringleader named Chrestus the Jews raised a tumult." In another place he refers to the Christians as a class of men devoted to a "new and mischievous superstition." And Tacitus speaks of Judea as "the source of this evil." Another speaks of the Christians as "a sect hated for their crimes," and Suetonius gives Nero special praise for having done the most that he could to wipe them off the face of the earth. In a *Life of Claudius*, another Roman emperor, Christ is spoken of as "a restless, seditious Jewish agitator." Pliny the Younger, writing to the emperor about A. D. 104, when he was governor of Bithynia, says the Christians do not worship the gods nor the emperors—as most of the people then did—nor could they be induced to curse Christ. He says they met mornings for virtuous vows, and chanted a hymn to Christ as to a god, and in the evening they ate together a common meal. And after he had put them to torture he said all he could find against them was "a perverse and immoderate superstition." Lucian, about the middle of the second century, speaks of Jesus as the crucified Sophist. We do not know certainly whether these references to Christ allude to Jesus of Nazareth at all. *Chrestians*
(205) and *Chrestus* were designations in common use all over the world, and the writers merely mentioned them as a sect well known as creating some noise in the world. Certainly the language used in describing them is not very complimentary. They may have referred to the Essenes, who had their ideal Chrest.

A modern writer has shown that the story of the persecution of Christians by the emperor Nero (a. d. 54-68) is a modern fabrication. Robert Taylor, in his *Diegesis* published in 1829, proved that Cornelius Tacitus never could have written the passage describing such persecution. It has been demonstrated that the whole of the so-called *Annals of Tacitus*, containing the celebrated passage, was forged by a Papal secretary named Poggio Bracciolini. In 1422, while in the receipt of a small salary under Martin V., he was tempted by an offer of five hundred sequins (which would now be equal to fifty thousand dollars) to engage in some mysterious literary work. Seven years later, six books of what are now called the *Annals of Tacitus* were brought to him by a monk from Saxony. Then all Christendom rejoiced to learn that the heathen Tacitus had mentioned Christ crucified under Pontius Pilate. Poggio, though a father both spiritually and carnally, was not a husband till the age of fifty-four. At seventy-two he accepted the office of secretary to the republic of Florence, and at seventy-nine he died, leaving five sons of his old age. Up to the last he was a busy student and writer. Fifty-six years after his death his fourth son was secretary to Pope Leo X., at which time the pope's
(206) steward, stimulated by a munificent reward, discovered the first six incomplete books of the *Annals*, being the unfinished work of Poggio in his old age.

The finding of ancient MSS. was a very lucrative business for scholars in those days. It began with Petrarch, who died in 1374, and did not end with Poggio, who died in 1459. Poggio discovered several orations of Cicero, a history

by Ammianus Marcollinus, and several other classic works, besides the unclassic writings of Tertullian, the first Latin Father.

The modern fabrication of many of the ancient Latin and Greek MSS. is now becoming apparent. Jean Hardouin, a French Jesuit, died in 1729, aged eighty-three years. He was deeply versed in history, language, and numismatology. At the age of forty-four he began to suspect that certain writings of the Christian Fathers were spurious, and soon became convinced that none of them were genuine. Then turning his attention to the Greek and Latin classics, he found evidence sufficient to convince him that most of those also were forgeries, being fabricated by the Benedictine monks after the middle of the fourteenth century.

Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, first found in Latin in the fifteenth century and then in Greek in the six-teenth century, we have no doubt is a probable forgery. And if so we have really no history of the primitive Church except what may be found in the New Testament and a few uncertain fragments of apocryphal literature, all much corrupted.

(207) The use of the word *Christus* and *Christianus* by the Latin writers is sufficient evidence of modern fabrication. Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary has not the word Christus nor Christianus in the Latin part, but in the part which gives the Latin equivalents of English words we find this:

A Christian = Christianus.

Christianism or Christianity = Christianismus.

Christmas = Christianataliam festum.

Now, the words Christus and Christianus are used by Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny (the younger), Tertullian, and all the succeeding Latin Fathers.

Christos in Greek is a very proper word, being a translation of the Hebrew *mashiach*, meaning "anointed." Therefore, the Latins would have rendered it *unctus*.

But the Benedictine monks who forged the literature of the pretended Fathers, instead of translating *christos,* audaciously transferred the word, and thus the new word *Christus*, with a capital C, became an additional name for the man-god of the Catholic Church.

Now, we respectfully raise the query whether it is rational to suppose that such wonderful things occurred in the little province of Palestine, surrounded by
(208) learned sages and philosophers of the most enlightened nations of the world, and not one direct and intelligent reference should have been made to them? Is it not strange that we have no account of the birth, sayings, and doings of this "last Adam," who is said to have come into this world on the most important mission, and yet we hear nothing of him except in four or five little anonymous and dateless pamphlets written a long while after the events are said to have transpired? Since the New Testament contains *all* that has been written on this subject, is it not our

highest duty to subject this book to the most thorough examination? This we shall now proceed to do in the most fearless manner, however startling the conclusions
(209) which may be reached.

CHAPTER IX. WHAT IS KNOWN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."—John 5: 39.

WE of course use the above passage as a motto, as the writer must have referred to the Old-Testament Scriptures, as the New Testament was not yet in existence. As this book is the sole dependence in finding evidence regarding Jesus, we naturally first inquire as to what is known of it. We find this volume to be made up of *twenty-seven* small tracts or pamphlets, fastened together for the sake of convenience.

(1) We have *four* sketches, purporting to be brief biographies of Jesus.

(2) Next we have a condensed history, called the *Acts of the Apostles.*

(3) Then we have *twenty-one* writings or letters addressed to different churches or individuals in the epistolary form of communication.

(4) And finally we have a *highly-wrought allegory*, partaking somewhat of the form of both history and prophecy.

We find that this volume of little pamphlets is called the "Authorized Version" of
(210) the New Testament.

We inquire who *authorized* this version, and find that it was gotten up by certain men, mainly Englishmen, in the year 1603 by the "special command" of James, who is called "king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland," and who was

addressed by these gentlemen, mostly clergymen, as "the Most High and Mighty Prince, Defender of the Faith," etc.

It now becomes a matter of superlative importance to determine the basis upon which this version of the New Testament was made. It is well known that in 1881 a New Version was published, and Rev. Alexander Roberts, D. D., a member of the committee of revisers, issued a little book entitled *Companion to the Revised Version*, to be circulated with it. This is the latest and highest authority by which to settle the question of the *basis or standard* of our "Authorized Version" of the New Testament. It is stated on its title-page that it is "Translated out of the Original Greek;" and it is safe and fair to let Dr. Roberts, the mouthpiece of the New Version Committee, tell us upon what Greek manuscripts this version of King James was based. After giving a history of the different Greek editions of the New Testament (the *first* of which was completed in 1514, and its publication formally sanctioned by Pope Leo X. in 1520), he inquires, "Which of the foregoing Greek texts formed the *original* from which our common English translation was derived?" "To this question the answer is, that Beza's edition of 1589 was the one usually followed."
(211) Beza's edition was based on Stevens' edition of 1550, and that was derived from the fourth edition of Erasmus, published in 1527. Beza, Stevens, Erasmus! In reference to the edition of Erasmus he said himself, "It was rather tumbled headlong into the world than edited." But the question now comes up, What was the basis of the edition of Erasmus? Dr. Roberts shall answer: "In the Gospels he principally used a cursive MS. of the fifteenth or sixteenth century,"... "admitted by all to be of a very *inferior character.*"... "He procured another MS. of the twelfth century or earlier, but Erasmus was ignorant of its value and made little use of it."... "In the Acts and Epistles he chiefly followed a cursive MS. of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, with occasional reference to another of the fifteenth century."... "For the Apocalypse he had only one mutilated MS." Dr. Roberts adds: "He had *no* documentary materials for publishing a complete edition of the Greek Testament."

The point we here raise is, that it is an admission made by the best orthodox authority that our "*Authorized* New Testament" was formed out of MSS. dating no farther back than the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and that even these were hastily and unskilfully used or not used at all.

But the question naturally arises, Have not earlier MSS. come to light, substantially confirming what we have in King James' Version? The answer is, that
(212) there are now in existence about two thousand MSS. containing *parts* of the New Testament, with about *one hundred and fifty thousand* variations, mostly trivial, but some very important; but no scholar, orthodox or liberal, will dare to pretend that any of these date any farther back than the fourth or fifth century; and he would be a reckless man, feeling bound to lie for what he might regard as the truth, who would contradict the admission of Dr. Roberts, that there are only five copies of

the New Testament, at all complete, of a greater antiquity than the tenth century, nor who would dare to question the statement of the Rev. George E. Merrell in his recent *Story of the Manuscripts*, that "there is a wide gap of almost three centuries between the original manuscripts of the evangelists and apostles and the earliest copies of their writings which have yet been discovered." Whether there ever were *original* manuscripts or *accurate* copies are questions which it would be prudent to hold for consideration until we have made further investigations. When we reverently listen to our ministers as they expound the Word, and learnedly tell us how certain sentences should have been translated from the "original Greek," let us not laugh in their faces, but respectfully ask them whether they do not know that there is *no original* Greek Testament or any certified copy, and that all we know upon these matters is highly conjectural and wholly unauthenticated.

The principal MSS. of the New Testament were unknown for a thousand years after the Christian era—to wit, those from which our "Authorized" New
(213) Testament was compiled—and their real origin cannot be traced, and even their accepted date is purely a matter of conjecture. The Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic MSS., supposed to date from the fourth and fifth centuries, are of uncertain and suspicious origin, and their date is a matter of simple guess by parties whose prepossessions would incline them to make them as ancient as possible. How easy it is for the best scholars to be imposed upon is shown from the fact that the experts of the British Museum would probably have been swindled by the recent Syrian forgery of the very ancient book of Deuteronomy but for the discovery of the fact by a French scholar that the "ancient document" was in fact only a year or two old, the product of a skilled copyist! The fact is, little or nothing is actually *known* by historical and documentary verification of the origin or dates of the MSS. upon which our New Testament is based.

The next question that arises in a rational mind in this connection is this: Have we in these twenty-seven little pamphlets all that has been written upon the subjects to which they relate? The answer to this question is very embarrassing. It is an undoubted fact that the ecclesiastical council that selected the books composing the New Testament had at least *fifty* Gospels, from which they selected *four*, and more than *one hundred* Epistles, from which they selected *seventeen*, and that from nearly a *score* of books professing to be records of the "Acts of the Apostles" they selected *one*, which Chrysostom in the fifth century says
(214) "was not so much as known to many." Then there are *forty-one* New-Testament books now extant, called apocryphal, relating to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, and besides the canonical and apocryphal books extant there are *sixty-eight* New-Testament books mentioned by the Christian Fathers of the first four centuries which are not now known to be in existence. Besides these, more than *fifty* books, written in the second century by more than *twenty* distinguished per-

sons, have mysteriously disappeared. The fact should also be emphasized that the adoption of the New-Testament books in the early part of the fourth century, as we now substantially have them, was followed by the *disappearance* and probable *destruction* of all books that could throw light upon the books received, and all the supposed copies of our Gospels to that period have been lost or destroyed. The fact to be kept in mind is this, that the New-Testament books which we now have were selected from scores and hundreds of writings claiming equal authority by a few self-appoint-ed men, who had very few qualifications and many disqualifications for the work they undertook for all coming generations. We have but a trifling proportion in number of the ancient records regarding Jesus.

But we now take up the little pamphlets as we have them, and try to arrange them in order of time. The oldest writings of the New Testament are the Epistles of Paul. And here we find ourselves embarrassed by the fact that biblical criticism shows that not more than *five—some say four*—of the Epistles ascribed to
(215) Paul were written by him—viz. First Thessalonians, Galatians, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, and Romans. The other nine ascribed to Paul were doubtless written by unknown second-century authors. The same uncertainty prevails in regard to the authorship of several, if not all, of what are called the General or Catholic Epistles, as well as of the Acts of the Apostles and the book of Revelation.

It is impossible to fix the dates of the New-Testament books except approximately. There is a great diversity of opinion. The earliest were probably written in the last half of the first century, and the latest certainly in the last quarter of the second century. Certain it is that no evidence can be found of the existence of our four Gospels until the latter part of the second century, about one hundred and fifty years after the alleged death of Jesus. It is therefore true what Prof. Robertson Smith, D. D., the learned Scotch Presbyterian minister, asserts, that our four Gospels are "unapostolic digests of the second century." From the Apostolic Epistles we learn nothing of the life and teachings of Jesus. With Paul, Christ was an *idea* rather than a *person*. Not a syllable do we find in his writings of the miraculous birth of Jesus, no reference to the Sermon on the Mount, much less to the miracles ascribed to him. He rather boasted that he had learned nothing of him from his disciples, but what he knew he had received at the time of his own miraculous conversion. He dwells upon the *death* and spiritual *resurrection*
(216) of Jesus, not upon his *life*; and the only *words* of Jesus quoted by Paul, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," are not found at all in the Gospels. All that Paul ever claimed to know about Jesus as a person he learned in a vision, and it is to be taken for what it is worth.

We are absolutely driven to the Gospels for information regarding the alleged founder of Christianity, his birth, his life, his teachings, and his death. And here the fact should be faced that Jesus never wrote anything about himself, his

mission, or his doctrines. We should not even know that he had learned the art of writing but for the incident mentioned in one of the Gospels (John 8:6) that on a certain occasion he stooped down and wrote in the sand; and now our learned New Versionists come along and snatch this from us by declaring that the beautiful story about the kind treatment of the woman taken in adultery is an interpolation not found in the best early MSS., so that we are not even sure that Jesus wrote anything even with his finger in the sand, or that he even knew how to write! Nobody pretends that Jesus ever directed his disciples or any one else to write down what he said and did, but, on the other hand, he often forbade his disciples to tell what he said and did; and much of what he is reported to have said was so obscure that the disciples themselves continually misunderstood him. Two reasons have been assigned for this omission of Jesus to write himself or to commission others to write down his sayings. The first is, that he said nothing which could not be
(217) found in then existing writings (as can easily be shown), and the second is, that he was so sure that the world was about to be destroyed, and that his own kingdom would so soon be set up and established upon the general ruin, that it was useless to write down what was said and done in the short remaining period of mundane history.

We have four brief sketches claiming to be biographies of Jesus, which the Church claims as authentic, from which we must draw all our information regarding Jesus.

It is not necessary here to assign the reasons of learned critics for their conclusion that the Gospel "according to" Mark is the older of the four. But it is worthy of note that there is not in it *one word* of *the miraculous conception story*, and not a *hint* of the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus, as the critics have a way of proving that the last chapter of Mark was added by a later hand.

Then we are embarrassed by the testimony of Irenæus, Origen, Jerome, and other Christian Fathers that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew, while there are indubitable internal evidences that this Gospel, as we have it, was written in Greek and by a Greek, and not a Jew, and that it is really a *theological* treatise written by some partisan for ecclesiastical reasons, and that if Matthew ever wrote a Gospel, it has been unfortunately lost or purposely destroyed. An early Christian sect, called in derision Ebionites, are supposed to have had the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, and they were persecuted and stamped out for deny-
(218) ing the miraculous conception and divinity of Christ, and with them, some critics suppose, perished the only genuine Gospel of Matthew. There is little if any doubt that the first and second chapters of our Matthew, giving an account of the miraculous birth and genealogy of Jesus, were added when this fiction was incorporated into Christianity as necessary to a divine Church establishment which should almost deify a hierarchy and bring the common people into subjection. In reading

Matthew's Gospel we should undoubtedly begin at chapter 3, and especially as the first two chapters are absurd, contradictory, and inconsistent. If Jesus was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it was not consistent or necessary to notice the genealogy of Joseph, and there is nothing more bungling than the genealogies of Mary and Joseph as given in Matthew and Luke. Indeed, the name Matthew is not Jewish, and there are those who doubt if there ever was such a man. It is a suggestive fact that the Egyptians had a *Matthu*, and that he was the *registrar*, or keeper of their records.

The Gospel ascribed to Luke he himself admits to be a résumé or compilation of what had been written by others and was the prevalent belief (Luke, chapter 1). In making a close analysis of this little tract a learned German critic Schleiermacher, shows that it was probably compiled from thirty-three different manuscripts. But since Luke himself claims nothing more than the office of a collector, his work is a mere digest of what others had written and a summary of
(219) what was then believed by some persons.

The Gospel according to John deserves a more careful and extended notice, from the fact that it differs in so many particulars from the other three Gospels. There is no evidence of the existence of this writing until A. D. 175, when it was mentioned in the Clementine Homilies,(1) and in 176, Theophilus of Antioch ascribed its authorship to John. But nothing is more certain than that John the Evangelist did not write this little book, as it contains internal evidence of its Grecian origin, and that it could not have been written by one familiar with Judaism and the geography of Palestine. Many of the best biblical scholars, orthodox and rationalistic, admit this fact, and our Methodist friends may amuse themselves at their leisure in reading a learned note from the pen of their great commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, at the close of his exposition of the first chapter of John, in which he points out thirty-five parallels between the writings of Philo the learned Platonist and the Gospel of John, unwittingly showing that it must have been written by an Alexandrian Greek.

(1) These were spurious.

And right here it is proper to expose an ancient fraud perpetuated in the Church to the present day—to wit, that Papius and Polycarp, early Christian writers, were personally acquainted with and instructed by John, and that therefore a succession was established with the teachings of Jesus himself, whose personal disciple John was. This story was originated by Irenæus, and the fraud consists in confounding John the son of Zebedee and Salome with one John who was said to be a
(220) presbyter in Asia Minor. This ingenious device is clearly exposed by Reber in his work—*The Enigmas of Christianity*. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, may be called one

of the *founders* of the papal hierarchy, as he in the second century attempted, but miserably failed, to furnish a catalogue of bishops in orderly succession from the apostles; and soon after he was followed in the same vain attempt by Tertullian, who first claimed supremacy for the bishop of Rome, calling him "*epis-copus epis-coporum*," a bishop of bishops. The fact is, it is not known who wrote the fourth Gospel, but it is certain that it was not written by the humble, amiable Galilean fisherman, but by a learned neo-Platonist, who was familiar with the dialectics of the learned Gnostic philosophers, and who desired most earnestly their complete suppression as essential to the success of the fixed purpose of priests to establish a Church, under an alleged divine commission, in which they were to be the kings and princes. Priests have always been the corrupters and perverters of truth for their own aggrandizement, and the Grecian treatise palmed upon the Church as the Gospel of St. John is one of the most illustrious examples. But for this so-called "Gospel" the existence of the papal hierarchy, and the consequent priestly pretensions in Protestant churches, would have been impossible. Enough has been presented to show that we have no alternative but to depend upon the synoptical Gospels, credited to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in our inquiry as to Jesus.

(221) Now let us see just where we stand as to the sources of information to which we are to look in learning whom Jesus was.

1. We are restricted to four, if not three, short biographies, accredited to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, only two of whom, Matthew and John, were mentioned among the disciples of Jesus.

2. That these sketches were written by those whose names they bear is not supported by a particle of proof, but, on the other hand, there is strong evidence that they were not written by the persons to whom they are credited; and this is especially true in regard to Matthew and John. Strictly speaking, our Gospels are anonymous.

3. These documents are without date, both as to the time in which they are written and the place of writing, and there is no proof of their existence until more than one hundred and fifty years after the alleged occurrence of the things recorded.

4. That these four Gospels were selected from many other writings most of which have been lost or destroyed.

5. That the men who made our four Gospels canonical, and rejected all the rest, were for the most part narrow, bigoted partisans, and had good reasons of a selfish nature to reject whatever did not favor their ambitious designs.

6. We have no proof that the four Gospels made canonical by the early ecclesiastical councils were the original writings of the evangelists, even if we
(222) were sure that they wrote anything, nor have we any proof that the copies adopted were genuine and authentic and the best then extant.

7. We have no proof that the copies we have are accurate copies of the ones adopted by the councils, but we have proof positive, admitted by the New Version-ists of 1881, that they contain many interpolations and additions and many evidences of forgeries and alterations by the ignorant, designing, and selfish ecclesiastics of the mediaeval centuries known as the Dark Ages.

8. That the Authorized Version read in the churches and in our families is based upon MSS. dating from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and that only fragmentary MSS. and unauthenticated copies are now in existence, dating from the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

9. That the copies we have bound up in our New Testament contradict themselves and one another in a great many particulars, and contain many statements which are geographically, historically, and philosophically absurd and incredible.

10. That, therefore, our Gospels are of uncertain authority and of undoubted human origin, and are to be so regarded without a doubt.

Now, it will be said that this is an infidel attack upon the New Testament, and that it tends to the overthrow of the only religion that can do the world any good. And yet, strange as it may appear, these facts are presented in the best inter-
(223) ests of true religion—presented because they are true, and therefore best adapted, nay absolutely essential, to the successful defense and propagation of virtue and morality.

The real infidels of the day are the theological liars and pretenders who are wilfully ignorant, or too dishonest and cowardly to publish what they know. Infidelity is breach of trust, disloyalty to truth. He who would do the most good must tell the whole truth. If we regard the Gospels as simple compilations from earlier documents and traditions, with occasional additions and alterations to meet occasions and times, we shall find in them very many things to admire and to adopt into our problems of life and systems of morals, many things worthy of imitation, many things to give courage and comfort in the struggle for existence, many things which would be just as true and just as useful if they had only been written yesterday by some one whom we have known from our childhood.

Regarding the Gospels as human, we can excuse their absurdities and errors, and while we cast these errors aside we joyfully accept what is true and good and

beautiful; but by claiming for them what they are not we bring even what is true into disrepute.

It was a master-stroke of worldly wisdom and policy when Irenæus in the second century (who first mentioned our four Gospels) sanctioned the monstrous assumption of all ecclesiastical authority by divine right by the bishops and priests, which power soon became centralized at Rome; but it was the greatest misfortune of the ages for the cause of true religion and sound morality. It not
(224) only made the Church of Rome with its immense machinery a necessary result, but it made the not less false systems of Protestant dogmatic theology possible. There is no use in attempting to disguise the fact that the so-called scheme of redemption is in principle and substance the same in the Catholic and orthodox Protestant Churches. Many intelligent persons feel that they would as soon belong to one as the other, while they secretly regard the Romanists as logically the more consistent.

The Romanists are strong in that they place the Church *first (jure divino)* and make the scriptures the product of the Church, and of course subject to its interpretation. Protestants are weak in that they make the Church subject to written scriptures, which were selected by the founders of *Catholicism*, and then for centuries altered, forged, interpolated, and manipulated by popes and priests to strengthen their authority and secure the absolute submission of the people.

The one fatal blunder of the Protestant Reformers was to found their system of theology upon a written book of the origin of which so little is known, and yet regarding which so much is known that it is impossible for persons of a rational, judicial mind to accept it as an infallible supernatural revelation.

The conclusion is inevitable that in the absence of everything that, by even a strain of language, can be called *evidence* as to the genuineness and authenticity, of our Gospels we cannot safely accept them as an infallible authority in religious
(225) matters. We have a right to examine them critically, just as we would read and study any other ancient writings of uncertain authorship and date.

The Reformation was in part the substitution of a *book* which was pronounced *infallible*, but which has proved to be very *fallible*, for a Church which claimed infallibility, but which had shown itself not only very fallible, but exceedingly corrupt and dangerous. Infallibility belongs to neither men nor books. Infallibility in books is an absurdity. A religion founded upon a printed book must submit to examination of both the origin and character of that book, and must shoulder the imperfections and errors which the discoveries of modern research have fully exposed. The principles of true religion inherent in human nature, an ineradicable constituent of the constitution of man, as has been shown, are to-day obscured and shackled by the false position in which its professed friends have placed it. It will be shown before these papers are concluded that a religion man-

acled by a printed book claiming infallibility, and made to depend solely upon an *historical character* who, if admitted to be historical, wrote nothing himself and commissioned no one to write anything for him, and of whose verbal teachings and actual mode of life we can never be sure,—a religion thus encumbered must suffer great loss, if not total failure, as men shall progress in knowledge and science shall uncover the past and demonstrate the absurdities of the superstitious dogmas of the ancient faiths. It is impossible to compress the largest brains of the
(226) nineteenth century into the smallest skulls of the twelfth century. The true friend of religion is the fearless man who dares attempt to rescue it from the accretions and perversions of the Dark Ages, and to establish its eternal principles of truth and righteousness in the very nature of man, in the elevation of moral character, in strict agreement with the demonstrated facts of the present, as opposed to the bigoted and degrading fancies of the past. To defend religion from the follies of its mistaken champions, and show that its foundations are secure and its ultimate triumph certain, may now be denounced as treason to the Church, but in coming years it will be seen to have been the work of men of whom the Church of to-day is not worthy.

The fact is, very little is known of the New Testament, but too much is well known to receive it in *evidence* in a matter of so much importance. The narratives it contains would be *ruled out of court* in any civilized country on the globe. It is evidently a huge *compilation* of what was at best only *traditions* among the nations of the earth, and even these traditions, mixed and mangled as they are, must have another and a more rational explanation than an historical or a literal one. This book *cannot be an infallible divine revelation.* Let us see whether we cannot find
(227) out what was really intended to be taught by the different writers.

CHAPTER X. THE DRAMA OF THE GOSPELS

"Great is the mystery of godliness."—1 Tim. 3:16.

"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery."—1 Cor. 2:7.

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."—1 Cor. 10:15.

IN early times every prominent religious teacher had his own gospel, as Paul asserts that he had his. The books that were canonized did not by any means shape the belief of the early Christians, but, on the contrary, their beliefs shaped the character of the books. "The question of a 'Catholic canon,'" says Professor Davidson, "was realized about the same time as the idea of a Catholic Church." The partisanship, low trickery, and mob violence by which votes of councils were obtained to establish ecclesiastical dogmas, the canonicity of Scriptures, etc., were such as now-a-days characterize a political meeting in the slums of an American city.

While, therefore, we quote the statements of the Gospels to prepare the way for the presentation of our points of argument, we do so only for convenience. They cannot, by any rule of sound criticism, testimony of contemporary writers, or even of spiritual discernment, be accepted as historical.

(228) The composition of the four Gospels indicates in many ways that they were originally collections of *religious stories*, each of which has a moral of its own, like the fables of Æsop, or, more properly, the narratives concerning Buddha given in the *Dhammapada*. This was a common mode of writing in early times. History and biography were hardly considered. Hence contradictions of verbal statement were not counted as of any importance. This is probably the reason why the transcribers neglected to remove the conflicts of statement and other inaccuracies that abound in the Gospels.

It is also more than probable that many parts of these works which have a narrative form were later interpolations. The first two chapters of Matthew and the first two in the Gospel according to Luke are unequivocally of this character. The style and diction are conspicuously unlike the language of the other parts of those works, as will appear on the slightest notice.

The oldest parts of the New Testament are the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, and Thessalonians. We will do well, therefore, to study them a little while by themselves, without reference to the Gospels and other documents, which were of later date. Paul asserts that he possessed and promulgated a gospel distinct and different from others, and he pronounced an anathema on the man or angel that should teach any different one. The way that he became possessed of it he sets forth as follows: He had no conference with any human being whatsoever about the matter, nor had he anything to do with those
(229) who were apostles before him, but he went into Arabia and afterward to Damascus. A hint is furnished by Josephus in his history of his own life which throws some light upon the purpose of this sojourn in Arabia. There were members of the Essenean brotherhood living there who were resorted to by individuals desiring instruction and discipline. Josephus himself went thither for that purpose. Paul evidently had a similar errand. He had been a Pharisee, but had embraced

another faith.

Why did he choose the Esseneans in preference to the Judean apostles? The answer must be that he was more certain of learning their tenets without adulteration. They were famous for their devotion to religious study, their cultivation of sacred literature and the art of prophecy, for their austerity, industry, and peculiar social organization. We shall find upon comparison that this was very closely resembling what is represented of the first believers at Jerusalem. They had their episcopacy, their deacons or stewards, their Holy Scriptures, and apostles or missionaries. These were numerous in Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt. As the Therapeutæ of the latter country resembled them, even to the signification of their name (healers, ministers), the probability is that the two were nearly identical. Eusebius, quoting the account of the Egyptian communes as given by Philo the Jew, has remarked the close similarity of their doctrines and customs with those of the apostolic congregations, and declared that they were Christians and their writings the Gospels.

(230) This, however, is not tenable, at least not tenable in the way that he suggests. Unfortunately for his statement, the Essenean brothers existed, with all the peculiarities described, long before the Christian era. Josephus treats of them as flourishing as early as the time of Jonathan, the first of the Maccabeans who held the office of high priest. About that period the canon of the Old Testament was finally collected. "Judas gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had (with Antiochos Epiphanes and his successors), and they remain with us" (2 Macc. 2: 14). The Maccabees or Asmoneans were partisans of the sect known as Asideans (Chaldeans), and afterward as Pharisees or Parsees. At this very period we first learn of the Sadducees or Zadokites, who chiefly belonged to the hereditary lineage of Aaron, and likewise of the Essenean fraternity. These last had their own sacred books, and took no part in the worship and sacrifices of the temple. In short, they were regarded as a people apart. Their books, we have good reason to suppose, were different in tenor from those of the Old Testament, and it is by no means improbable that they included the scriptures written in Greek by the Alexandrians and now called the Apocrypha.

The designation *Minim* may mean "observers of the heavens," and the Essenes appear to have been such. "Before sunrising," says Josephus, "they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as if they made a supplication for its rising." This
(231) illustrates the taunt to the Pharisees, that they could discern the face of the sky in regard to the weather, but could not read there the signs or symbols of the times, which were also written there.

The Saddukim were doubtless the disciples and partisans of Judas of Galilee, or Gaulonitis beyond Jordan. This man and his colleague Sadduk began their ca-

reer at the time of the census or enrolment by Cyre-nius, which took place after the displacing of Arche-laus, the son of Herod I., from the throne of Judea. There are many plausible reasons for identifying them with the apostolic congregation. They established a new religious or philosophical sect, which Josephus declares had a great many followers, and laid the foundations of the subsequent miseries of the Jews. Their tenets agreed with those of the Pharisees; but, says the historian, "they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They do not value any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord." The Jewish nation, Josephus declares, was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree. It is plain that the books interdicted in the *Talmud* pertained to the sect which followed these teachers, and perhaps also to the Essenes.

The Gospels show evidence of having been compiled from previous works. The one ascribed to Mark is apparently the more original, being shorter, more
(232) concise, and exhibiting fewer traces of having been tampered with. The Gospel according to Matthew is from the same original, having whole sentences in exactly the same words, but it is amplified and more diffuse. Neither of these Gospels was recognized by Paul, and indeed there is much reason to doubt whether he had ever seen them. If he recognized any evangelic compilation as genuine, it was the one ascribed to Luke; and even then the treatise must have been rewritten after his period.

There exists abundant reason for regarding the Essenean worship as more or less identical with that of Mithras, the Persian "god of heaven." This appears to be sustained by a comparison of the cults. Thus, as has been remarked, they permitted no discourse on secular concerns before sunrise, but chanted prayers like the *Gathas*, as in supplication to the divinity presiding over the sky. Their personal habits exhibited a profound awe for the *Sun*. Their name itself was not peculiar to the fraternity of Palestine and Arabia, but was borne by the ascetic priests at Ephesus, whose manner of life was similar; and Plutarch informs us that certain *osioi* (another form of the name) performed mystic rites in the temple of Apollo at Delphi in commemoration of Zagreus, the sun-god of the Orphic religion, who was slain and resuscitated.

The Persian theology is evidently the basis and source of Judaism. The symbolism of the universe afforded a model for their religion. After the conquest of Pontus and the pirate empire by Pompey, about 70 b. c., the worship was in-
(233) troduced into the Roman empire. The verdict of Salamis was thus reversed. The defeat of Xerxes, who was a zealous propagandist, had assured the ascendency of Apollo at Delphi and Demeter at Eleusis over the religion of Ahura Mazda; but the conquest of the Mithras-worshippers by Pompey resulted in the introduction

of their rites into every part of the Roman world. From the river Euphrates to the Wall of Antoninus in Britain, and into the forests of Germany, Mithraism everywhere prevailed. For four centuries it disputed the supremacy with Christianity; and even when it was proscribed and forbidden by imperial authority, it still retained its hold upon the *pagani* or inhabitants of the rural districts. The Templars and other secret fraternities of the Middle Ages were more or less similar in character to those of the Parsee sun-god, and the rites which we have heard denounced as magic and witchcraft were Mithraic ceremonies mingled with aboriginal customs. Although the divinity is essentially Persian, we cannot but regard the secret worship as an Assyrian institution. M. Lajard has given an account of this cultus, which so generally supplanted the mystic worship of the West.

The story of the temptation of Jesus, if read intelligently "between the lines," will be seen to indicate the characteristics of the Mithraic initiation. "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John. And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and there came a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son,
(234) in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness, and he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan [Anramainyas], and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him."

These different clauses relate to different parts of the mystic ceremony.

The sojourn of the apostle Paul in Arabia, it is apparent, was for a purpose in close analogy with that of Jesus in the wilderness, as already described. "It had pleased God," he says, "to reveal [or unveil] his Son in me;" so, without conferring with anybody, he set forth on his holy errand, and upon his return began to preach a gospel which he declares was not according to man nor taught in lessons, but was received by the revelation. He was instructed at the fountain intuitively, and so was "not a whit behind the chiefest apostles." Hence in the utmost intensity of feeling he proclaimed, "If we, or even an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, let him be accursed." He goes on to recite the history of his career to show his entire independence of Judaism and the other apostles, and dwells upon his absolute rupture with Peter at Antioch on the ground of the adherence of the latter to the discarded restrictions of that religion.

The question now becomes pertinent, What is the purport of this "faith"? In the fifteenth chapter of the First Corinthian Epistle he sets forth the chief points as follows: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received: how that
(235) Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; also that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, and after that of above five hundred brethren at once; after that he was seen of James, and then of all the apostles; and, last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

It may appear strange to the common reader to be told that these matters, which the apostle sets forth with so much apparent confidence, are *mystic and arcane the transcript of older theologies and constituted throughout of astrologie symbolism.* The ancient faiths of the different peoples contain doctrines and dramatic narrative closely analogous with the evangelic story of Jesus. The later Persians had the legend of Saoshyas (the savior), the son of the virgin Eredatferi, who conceives him in a miraculous manner. "He will appear and restore all things, after which he will himself become subordinate, that the Creator may be supreme and all in all."

In the Orphic drama, as it was performed by the Osians at the temple of Apollo at Delphi, the birth of Zagreus of the holy maid Persephoneia as the son of the Supreme Being, Zeus, is duly represented; then his proposed heirship of the universe, his passion and death; and finally his restoration again into life through a reincarnation as son of the virgin Semelê under the new name of *Dionysos.* The myth was Assyrian, Semelê being the same as Mylitta, the mystic mother, and her child, Shamas Dian-nisi, or the personified Sun, the Judge or Lord of mankind. *The death, [pg 236] resurrection, and glorification of this Son of God were celebrated in the mystic dramas of several countries.*

The legends of Atys in Asia Minor, of Adonis or Tammuz in Syria, of Osiris in Egypt, were derived from the same source. They cover the same field and have the same occult meaning. The apocalypse, or unveiling of the mystic purport of the sacred dramas to those considered worthy and competent to understand them, was the great object of initiation. The Gospels were regarded formerly as accounts of a tragedy of analogous character. The higher functionaries of the Roman Catholic Church, we have reason to believe, have this same view, which is more than hinted in several places. Paul speaks unequivocally in this way of his gospel and the preaching or heralding of Jesus Christ, "*according to the revelation or unfolding of the mystery now made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*" When the disciples asked of Jesus why he spoke to the common multitude in parables he makes this reply: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the reign of God; but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand."

In these religious stories there is a very similar general outline. There is a divine parentage and a career given; then the Holy One is put to death, the corpse is brought in for burial, the tragic occurrence is mourned by women, and the ceremonial is concluded by his resuscitation and ascension. There were varied phases
(237) of the representation, but they always had an intimate relation to the *seasons of the year and the analogous occurrences in the world of nature.* Thus the supposed death more frequently occurred at the beginning of spring, and was mourned for

a lenten period of forty days, which the vernal equinox brought to a close. Then funeral rites were performed, and after three days, in the case of Adonis, it was fabled that the god arose and ascended into the higher sky. In the Dionysia or Bacchic rite the god descended into hell, the world of death, and brought thence his virgin mother, that they might be glorified together.

The Neo-Platonists taught that these occult rites were a form of representing philosophic and religious dogmas as if in scenes of common life by living persons, and of shadowing them by ceremonies and processions. This is more than hinted by Plato himself, and is undoubtedly true. The candidates were prepared for participation by long periods of fasting and various purifications, moral and physical. The Eleusinia consisted of a drama of several days in duration, in which the abduction, or rather death, of Persephoné and the wanderings of her mother Demeter served as the veil or *myesis* to the doctrine of resurrection and life of eternity. The author of *The Great Dionysiak Myth* has ably presented the various forms of the Bacchic rites with the same basis and dénouement. Even the Hebrew Scriptures allude to the matter. The "mourning for the only one" is mentioned by Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah.

(238) That the story of Jesus was in like manner a drama for religious ends, consisting of a miraculous parentage, a career of goodness, a passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, is, to say the least, no improbable solution of the question.

It has also been noticed that the events of the seasons were denoted by the mystic symbolism. The sun, stars, constellations, and earth are commemorated in regard to their annual careers by these observances; whether because they were essential to the physical well-being of man or were especially appropriate for symbology different writers have conjectured differently, according to their own mental peculiarities. Probably both are right, so far as their views extend.

It becomes us now to investigate the drama of the Gospels more carefully. The mythologic story of Mithras was probably Assyrian in detail, though Persian in first conception. It embraced the same notions as were denoted by the mysteries of the Western peoples, and hence the Mithraic worship in a very great degree superseded the arcane religions of Asia Minor and Europe. Very naturally, as may easily be perceived, the *framework of the Gospel narrative is on the basis of these rites.* The influence of the other ancient faiths is also conspicuously manifest. The physical, and particularly the astronomic, features are everywhere present in the external structure of Christianity. Sir Isaac Newton was quick to perceive that the festivals of the Church had been fixed and arranged upon the observed
(239) phenomena of the heavens, and gave a detailed list of correspondences. It was not prudent, however, even in his time, for a man to say all he knew, and he carefully avoided the drawing of any conclusions which might encourage further inquiry in that direction.

It has already been suggested that the gospel of Paul was at the bottom Essenean and Mithraic; and in accordance with that hypothesis the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension would *be solar and astrologic events*. The Essenes, as well as the other Mithras-worshippers, adored the sun and greeted his rising with invocations and sacred chants. The death and resurrection were "according to the Scriptures." In other words, they were duly set forth after the manner of literal occurrences in the sacred books of the Essenes long before Paul was born. The adepts of that fraternity understood the matter, and the hostility which they and the other disciples always exhibited toward the great apostle was because he divulged too much. His writings contained many *dysnoetic* matters, Peter declared—many matters of higher knowledge improperly expressed, which they that are unlearned and unstable might wrest to their own hurt. According to the scriptures of the brotherhood, the drama of the Gospel had its dénouement in the passion and tragedy of Jesus. Paul, like a genuine adept, has accepted this narrative as the basis of his gospel; nevertheless, as though aware that it is a figurative rather than a literal occurrence, he nowhere speaks of the crucifixion
(240) as a crime.

We use the term *drama* in this connection from a deliberate purpose, because we believe it correct. It was the designation of the matters represented in the Eleusinian, Dionysiac, and other arcane rites. The theatre of the Greeks consisted of such tragic and other representations, which were performed at the temples of Bacchus and Æsculapius. Our modern theatre originated in like manner from the mysteries and mir-acle-plays of the Middle Ages, in which monks and priests acted the parts of the different persons of the Gospel drama. The "Passion Play," which excites so much interest in these modern times, is very suggestive, but little understood by sacerdotalists.

The Christian worship in the earlier centuries was not so unlike or incongruous with the pagan customs as may have been supposed. The emperor Hadrian, when in Egypt, was forcibly impressed with the apparent identity of the worshippers of Serapis with those of Christ. "Those who worship Serapis are Christians," he declared, "and those who call themselves Christian bishops are devotees of Serapis. The very patriarch himself when he came into Egypt was said by some to worship Serapis and by others to worship Christ."

The same ambiguity prevailed in the case of Christianity where it had been in contact with the arcane worship of Mithras. Seel endeavors to explain the matter as one of policy. He states that the early Christians in Germany for the most
(241) part ostensibly paid worship to the Roman gods in order to escape persecution. He makes a supposition as regards the adoption of the secret religion. "It is by no means improbable," says he, "that under the permitted symbols of Mithras they worshipped the Son of God and the mysteries of Christianity. In this point of

view," he adds, "the Mithraic monuments so frequent in Germany are evidences of the secret faith of the early Christian Romans." We are not ready to accept this notion that the Christians paid homage to one God, meaning another at the same time, except on the hypothesis that they regarded Mithras and Jesus as virtually the same personification. This conclusion seems to be countenanced by Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo. "I know," says he, "that the worshippers of the divinity in the cap [the statues of Mithras were decorated with the red Phrygian or cardinal's cap] used to say, 'Our god in the cap is Christian.'"

That the crucifixion of Christ was not a literal historic occurrence seems to require no argument. Besides, the first day of the Passover was never a Friday, nor can it be according to the established principles of the Jewish calendar. The account in the three synoptic Gospels is therefore manifestly not correct as a literal occurrence; and the unknown writer of the Gospel of John has lamely attempted to evade the difficulty by placing the crucifixion on the day before the Passover.

There was a mystic reason, however, for this statement of the synoptic Gospels. The story of the crucifixion had the same occult meaning as that of
(242) the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The forty days in which Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion" corresponded with the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Hence, as the Israelites left Egypt on the first day of the Passover, so Jesus was also crucified on that day. Not being an historical event, one actually occurring, the statement was permitted in order to preserve the harmony and identity of the myths.

As, however, the story is astrological, we need only explain that the sun crossing the equinoctial line at the 21st of March is thus crucified, the ecliptic and the equator constituting the real cross in the form of the letter X. On the third day he appears ascending in the northern hemisphere, and so is "raised again according to the Scriptures."

Paul, while referring to these matters as *apparently historical*, never departs from their *symbolic* import. In fact, he dwells upon this so emphatically that the events are only mentioned for the purpose of indicating his meaning more definitely. "I am crucified with Christ," says he; "they that are of Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Nobody will for a moment imagine that this crucifixion meant any physical violence, but only a çasting off of those dispositions which are essentially unspiritual. "Our old man is crucified," Paul explains again, "in order that the body of sin might be destroyed;… likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." This is the real meaning
(243) of the death and resurrection as a spiritual matter. The external history which is so much insisted upon by the partisans of the letter vanishes utterly away before the eyes of him who perceives as well as sees, and understands through intelligence rather than by scientific and logical reasoning.

The early Fathers of the Church never scrupled to employ rites, symbols, and other agencies which had been previously used by the various priesthoods of the' pagan worships. The entire biography of Jesus, as it is set forth in the Gospels, exhibits unequivocally astrological features, and a resemblance to the narratives of the gods so close as to be equivalent almost to actual identity. The miraculous conception was but a counterpart of many others: Atys, Adonis, Hercules, Bacchus, and Æsculapius were fabled to have been sons of gods by human mothers. The 25th of December was also the birthday of Mithras; and Chrysostom, with characteristic sophistry and equivocation, explains the matter and justifies it as follows: "On this day also the birthday of Christ was lately fixed at Rome, in order that while the heathen were busied with their profane ceremonies the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed." He adds: "They call this the birthday of the Invincible One: who so invincible as the Lord that overthrew and conquered death? They style it the birthday of the sun; he is the Sun of righteousness of whom Malachi speaks: 'Upon you who fear my name the Sun of righteousness
(244) shall arise with healing in his wings.'"

At the very outset a serious difficulty is encountered. When the Roman emperor Theodosius, fifteen centuries ago, decreed the universal authority of the Christian Church, he commanded also that all books of the philosophers and others not according to the new faith should be destroyed. This leaves only the collection known as the *New Testament* and the writings of certain theologians, together with certain Gospels, Epistles, and Apocalypses denominated apocryphal which were extant during the earlier centuries of our era. In addition to this, there is internal evidence in the writings now regarded as canonical that they have been abridged, added to, and changed, so that the sense is more or less obscured and doctrines are affirmed which were not in the original documents.

With the exception, perhaps, of some of the Epistles of Paul, James, and First Peter there is no evidence, or even probability, that any other book of the New Testament, whether Gospel, Epistle, or Apocalypse, was written, or even known, by the individual whose name it bears. Indeed, it is well known among students that the practice was formerly common to append the name of some distinguished personage to a letter or treatise and put it forth with this to commend it. "Our ancestors," says the philosopher Jamblichus, "used to inscribe their own writings with the name of Hermès, he being as common property to all the priests." Very significant, therefore, is the clause "according to" which occurs in the title of every
(245) one of the four Gospels. Each of them has been in existence some fifteen or sixteen centuries "without father, without mother," or any other voucher or guarantee as evidence of the truth of the statements which it contains. We have no obligation to hesitate in our avowal that not one of the four reputed evangelists had anything to do with the production to which his name is affixed. The works must stand

upon their intrinsic merits, and receive consideration accordingly.

Two centuries had passed away after the beginning of the present era before the designation of *New Testament* was used in connection with any collection of writings, and before any special authority was claimed for them. The men who first suggested their canonicity were Irenæus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian of Carthage. Neither of these men, so far as is known, made any attempt to demonstrate that any book of the collection was genuine or authentic. Professor Davidson has declared in regard to the scribes who made the copies of the books of the *Old Testament* that they did not refrain from changing what had been written or inserting fresh matter. The same course has been taken likewise with the text of the New Testament. Heretics and orthodox alike added to its matter in order to establish their peculiar dogmas. The text is nowhere pure. The doctrines of the Trinity, the Nativity of Jesus, his Godhead and equality with the Father, the story of Mary, were all introduced from Egypt and engrafted into the Gospels.

Jesus is represented as having been born in a cave or stable at the moment
(246) of midnight. At that period the constellation Virgo is cut exactly in half by the eastern horizon, the sun itself being beneath in the zodiacal sign of Capricorn, which was also called "the Stable of Augeas" that Hercules was set to cleanse. Justin Martyr corroborates this by stating that Christ was born when the sun (Mithras) takes his birth in the stable of Augeas, coming as a second Hercules to cleanse a foul world. Hence the rosary of the Roman Catholic Church has this service: "Let us contemplate how the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the time of her delivery was come, brought forth our Redeemer at midnight and laid him in a manger."

By the cave, or *petra*, we may understand the cave of initiation, which was always employed in ancient mystic rites. There was such a cave at Bethlehem, and Jerome affirms that the mysteries of Adonis were celebrated there in his time. Justin has preserved the tradition that Mithras was born in a cave or petra, and Porphyry asserts that his rites were observed in caves representing the vault of the heavens. The famous declaration to Peter owes all its significance to this fact: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (petra) I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Undoubtedly, this passage is an interpolation; nevertheless, it is susceptible of explanation. Jesus
(247) having asked the twelve apostles who he was said to be, they reply: the "reincarnation" of this or that prophet, as it was believed that such rebirth was usual among men. Peter then avows that he is the Son of God.

Significantly, Peter is not a Jewish proper name, but relates to function. It is a Semitic word denoting an interpreter of oracles. The priests of Apollo among the Gauls were denominated *paterœ*, as having the gift of prophecy. The residence of Balaam the prophet was called *Petur*, and there were oracles of Apollo at Patrai in Achaia and Patara in Asia Minor. When, therefore, it is announced that the Church would be built "upon this rock," we may understand it to be the apostle's oracular utterance that Jesus was the Son of God. The Church that was thus established consisted solely of adepts and initiates, the clergy only, and the higher functionaries at that. The laity only *belong to* the Church: the others *are* the Church.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy have for centuries caused the fiction to be promulgated that the apostle Peter founded the universal see of Rome. This is like the mystic utterances of Jesus in speaking to the multitude in parables. The pope, cardinals, and prelates know the real truth. There never took place, so far as any historical evidence exists, any visit, and much less the martyrdom, of the apostle Peter at Rome. The pope is not the successor of any Christian apostle whatever, but only of the pagan high priest. Under the republic and emperors the *pontifex*
(248) *maximus* was the supreme religious dignitary. Julius Cæsar held that office. He presided over the worship and interpreted the sacred oracles. It was a direction in the secret religion never to change the foreign names. The Chaldaic designation of the supreme pontiff and hierophant was *peter*. When the ancient worship was suppressed the Roman bishop succeeded to the pontificate; and by this exaltation became vicar of the Lord and successor of the peter or pagan pontiff of Rome.

The tradition of the Magi or wise men coming from the east to worship the infant Jesus, which was prefixed to the Gospel of Matthew, is pretty well set forth by the names given them: *Kaspar*, the white one; *Melchior*, the king of light; and *Balthasar*, the lord of treasures. The additional legend that they travelled to Germany and were buried at Cologne grew out of the fact that the Mithraic worship was prevalent in that region.

It should be borne in mind, while considering the astrologic character of the story of Jesus, that the divis-ion of the apparent path of the sun among the stars into the constellations which form the zodiac was made and known throughout the Oriental world and employed in its religious myths at an antiquity so remote as not to be known when the plan was devised. Astrological correspondences are carefully maintained all through the gospel narrative. The apostles represent the twelve months, each of them being sent or commissioned to announce him (the sun) to the people.

The special events and their dates are commemorated by the Church so as
(249) to be coincident with astrological data. The designation "Lamb of God" comes directly from the fact that the crucifixion was placed at the time the sun crosses

the equinoctial line in March, and so entered the zodiacal sign of Aries, the Lamb. He was thus "slain before the foundation of the world," or year, and takes away the sins or evils of winter. Having descended into hell, or the winter period, he rises from the dead. He is now enthroned; the four beasts, denoting the four chief constellations in each quarter of the zodiacal circle—Taurus, Leo, Aquila, and Aquarius—adore him, and the twenty-four elders (or hours) fall down and worship him. The miracle of turning water into wine is done every year, as Addison has sung,:

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"May the sun refine
The grape's soft juice and mellow it to wine."

The curse of the fig tree is visited on every plant that is feeble and poorly rooted when the sun's heat comes upon it. John the Baptist says of Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease." The 24th of June, St. John's Day, is the last of the summer solstice, from which period the days shorten, as, on the contrary, from the 25th of December, the natal day of Jesus, they lengthen. "This is the sixth month with her that was called barren," said the angel Gabriel to Mary on the 25th of March, the Annunciation, nine months before Christmas. On the 15th of August the Church celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into the heavenly chamber of the King of kings, and accordingly the constellation Virgo (or
(250) Astræa) also disappears, being eclipsed by the light and glory of the sun. This disappearance continues seven days. Miriam, the virgin sister of Moses and Aaron, doubtless also an astral character, was secluded seven days while leprous. Three weeks later the sun has moved on in the sky, permitting the constellation again to appear; and accordingly the Church celebrates the 8th of September as the anniversary of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

The prominent pagan symbols which are now adopted by the Christian prelacy are generally astronomical. Astrology and religion always went hand in hand, and have not been legally divorced. At an earlier period the sun entered the zodiacal sign of Taurus at the vernal equinox. This fact led to the adoption of the bull or calf as a symbol of the Deity. We notice this fact all over the ancient world, and in some modern peoples that have not had a learned caste of priests. Every 2152 years the zodiac shifts backward one sign—i. e. one-twelfth of its whole extent. Hence, eventually, Aries, the Ram or Lamb, took the place of the Bull to represent the god of spring. The paschal lamb, the ram-headed god Amen of Egypt, and the lamb of Christian symbolism thus came into existence.

Since that the constellation Pisces has become the equinoctial sign, and the Fish is the symbol of the Church. Hence the bishop of Rome employs the seal of the fisherman, and the Gospel narrative has made St. Peter a "fisher." In this way the
(251) entire passion of Jesus from the crucifixion to the ascension is astronomic.

The Roman Catholic Church, having the superior understanding of the matter, holds Protestants in derision for making a fetish of the Bible and worshipping the sun, while not comprehending the matter intelligently. Indeed, it is known by every intelligent priest that the sun and phallic symbols characterize every world-religion. No matter what attempts are made to disguise the matter, such is the fact. That the sun is the light of the world needs but a mention; and so is Jesus as the avatâr or personification. The cross on which he is impaled was a symbol of the phallic worship thousands of years ago. The form may be an X, f, or f, but it means the same. He is buried in winter and resuscitated in the spring.

Thus, to recapitulate: The Christian religion consists of the worship of a divine being incarnated in human form in order to redeem fallen man, born of a virgin, teaching immortality, working wonders, dying through the machinations of the evil one, rising from death, re-ascending into heaven, and to be the judge of the living and dead. The Mithraic worship, its great rival and counterpart, was constituted with similar imagery. The festivals appointed in honor of Mithras were fixed in accordance with the seasons of the year, his birth being at the end of the solstice in December, his death directly after the equinox in March. Christ, being like Mithras, the personification of the sun and lord of the cosmos, enacts a career on earth corresponding in its principal parts to that of the sun in the
(252) heavens. The Holy Spirit as a wind or atmosphere is the herald of his advent. The Virgin is the moon, the mother of the sun and queen of heaven, just as she was in the pagan world under different names.

Often also at evening we witness the sun undergoing a bloody passion and dying amid the reddened sky, leaving to the one whom he loves the moon as his mother.

So conscious is the Church of its descent in direct line from the former paganism that it has adopted the symbols of its predecessor and placed many of the old gods in its catalogue of saints along with the Assyrian archangels. Bacchus appears there as St. Bacchus, St. Denis or Dionysius, St. Liber, St. Eleutherius, St. Lyacus. Priapus is there as St. Foutin, St. Cosmo, and St. Damian. The nymph Aura Placida is St. Aura and St. Placida. There is also St. Bibiana, whose anniversary occurs on the day of the Grecian festival of tapping the wine-casks. The star Margarita has become St. Margaret, and Hippolytus the son of Theseus, the hero-founder of the Athenian polity, has also been canonized. The true image, or *veraicon*, has become St. Veronica, as the supreme hierophant of Roman paganism is St. Peter. Then, too, there are sainted dogmas personified, as St. Perpetua, St.

Félicitas, St. Rogatian, St. Donatian, etc. There are also St. Abraham, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. David, and St. Patrick, whose anniversary falls on that of his well-known predecessor, Pater Liber, the Roman Bacchus. The keys of the Italian Janus and the Phrygian Kybelé are now held by the pope as the keys of the kingdom of
(253) heaven.

There is not a feature, symbol, ceremony, or dogma in the Church which did not have a pagan prototype. Another fact is equally curious. While the worship of Mithras is the evident origin of the Christian cultus, the Lamas of Thibet in the heart of Asia also have ecclesiastical orders, ceremonies, and other institutions which are the almost literal counterpart of those of Rome.

Whether there ever was really such an individual living on the earth as Jesus of Nazareth becomes, in view of these facts, a minor question. Myth, legend, tradition, and fancy have so transformed him that there is no nucleus of original humanity left in sight. He is almost absolutely without an historical mention. He has become a *myth, a personification*, whether he was really a man or not. He is therefore an *ideal*, and not *real*. The passages in Josephus are unquestionable forgeries. Tacitus speaks of him as having been crucified under Pilate, but in no way as an occurrence to be vouched for. Suetonius in his life of Claudius Cæsar states that the emperor banished the Jews from Rome because they raised sedition under the instigation of one Chrêstos. If this is to be considered as meaning the reputed founder of the Christian religion, the orthography of the name is very suggestive. Godfrey Higgins declares in his *Anacalypsis* that it was the original term used, and was changed to Chreistos and Christ for ecclesiastical reasons. He was of opinion also that transcribers had made these alterations in the books
(254) of the New Testament. Chrêstos was a title of Apollo and other divinities, and was conferred upon the better class of citizens in certain Grecian states. Once the term is applied to Jesus in the first Epistle of Peter: "The Lord is Chrëstos." The probabilities favor the supposition, the term Messiah, which is the Hebrew equivalent for Christ, being nowhere used except in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John to designate Jesus, and that being a doubtful passage.

There are few data remaining that indicate the character of Jesus. So far as these are definitive they exhibit a close relationship to the Essenean brotherhood.

During the reign of Herod I., Hillel, a Babylonian, became president of the Sanhedrim. He was thus the recognized head of the school, his opponents being known as Shammaites. Both parties professed to be the custodians of the Kabala or traditions of the ancients. These comprised the arcane literature of the Jews, which was to be kept carefully away from the laity. The Hillelites appear to have been more tenacious of principles, but the Shammaites were very captious in regard to the minutiae. The *Logia*, or aphorisms, imputed to Jesus accord with the utterances of Hillel, and in a degree justify the opinion of the Rabbis.

The relations of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem and his early abode at Nazareth are of the character of myth, and serve to indicate his association with the Essenes. Bethlehem was the reputed birthplace of King David, and afterward
(255) the prophet Micah, depicting the rise of Hezekiah as the messiah and liberator of Judea from the Assyrian yoke, assigns his origin to the same place. This latter prince could not have been the son of Ahaz, whom he is said to have succeeded, having been born when that king was but ten or eleven years old. That the dynasty of Ahaz was overthrown is intimated in the declaration of Isaiah (7: 9), and by his announcement of the accession of a new prince (9: 6, 7; 11:1, etc.). The town of Bethlehem and the places about are enumerated in the second chapter of First Chronicles as containing "the families of the scribes," "the Kenites," from whom proceeded the Rechabites of later times. These Kenites appear to have been a sacerdotal and literary tribe, like the Magians of Media. They are said to have lived near the city of palm trees (Judges 1:16), and to have removed into the southern part of the Judean territory. Moses was described as having intermarried and been adopted among them, and the kings Saul and David were more or less familiar with them. Saul found them when be marched against the Amalekites, and David sent them presents, as being accustomed in his career as an outlaw to "haunt" their region. Elijah the prophet is said to have gone into their country when he was driven out of the kingdom of Samaria.

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem would seem, therefore, to have some mystic reference to this people, as well as to the notion of a lineal descent from David.
(256) His abode in the earlier years of life at Nazareth was evidently a myth of kindred nature. Curiously enough, the writer of the first chapter of Luke has represented Mary as a resident of Nazareth, while the second chapter of Matthew describes Joseph as taking up his abode there incidentally, fulfilling the word of the Essenean prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene," or Nazarite. The Esseneans were also denominated *Nazarim*, and we may perceive the idea suggested by the name that Jesus belonged to their body. It was a common mode of writing, to describe an every-day occurrence in a form conveying a mystic or occult meaning beneath the apparent statement. The character of Jesus as a prophet and representative personage is thus actually signified. His birth in the country of the Kenites and adepts betokened his consecration and separation, while the residence at Nazareth typified his Essenean relations.

The congregation of disciples at Jerusalem and their sympathizers in Palestine were designated as Nazore-ans and Ebionim. It is no great stretch of imagination to presume them to have been an offshoot of the Essenean brotherhood. These were zealous propagandists, and their modes of life and action coincide very closely with those of the early Church. The writers of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles describe the apostles and their converts as living after the man-

ner of an Essenean commune. Jesus "ordained twelve that they should be with him;... and they went into a house," or became as one family. This was precisely
(257) like the Essenes and Therapeutæ. "In the first place," says Philo, "not one of them has a house of his own which does not belong to all of them." For besides their living together in large societies, each house is also open to every visiting brother of the order. "Furthermore, all of them have one store of provisions and equal expenses; they have their garments in common, as they do with their provisions. They reside together, eat together, and have everything in common to an extent as it is carried out nowhere else." Hence we read without surprise that the multitude came about them, so that they could not so much as eat bread. The apostolic congregation is also described as imitating the same form of living: "All that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all of them as every one had need.... Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man as he had need." For a time the apostles, it is stated, were stewards of the whole body, teaching them and supplying them with food, till finally seven Hellenistic Jews were selected and set apart for that purpose.

Eusebius comments upon the account given by Philo of the Therapeutæ, as follows: "These facts appear to have been stated by a man (Philo), who at least
(258) has paid attention to those that have expounded the sacred writings. But it is highly probable that the ancient commentaries which he says they have are the very Gospels and writings of the apostles, and probably some expositions of the ancient prophets, such as are contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews and many others of St. Paul's Epistles.... Why need we add an account of their meetings, and the separate abodes of men and women in these meetings, and the exercises performed by them, which are still in vogue among us at the present day; and which, especially at the festival of our Saviour's passion, we are accustomed to use in our fastings and watchings and in the study of the divine word! All these the abovementioned author has accurately described and stated in his writings; and they are the same customs that are observed by us alone at the present day, particularly the vigils of the great festivals, and the exercises in them and the hymns that are commonly recited among us. He states that whilst one sings gracefully with a certain measure, the others, listening in silence, join in singing the final clauses of the hymns; also that on the above-mentioned days they lie on straw spread on the ground, and, to use his own words, they abstain altogether from wine and taste no flesh. Water is their only drink, and the relish of their bread, salt, and hyssop. Besides this, he describes the grades of dignity among those who administer

the ecclesiastical services committed to them—those of the deacons and president
(259) of the episcopate as the highest. But whosoever desires to have a more accurate knowledge of these things may learn them from the history already cited; but that Philo, when he wrote those statements, had in view the first heralds of the gospel and the original practices handed down from the apostles must be obvious to all"

As if to afford further foundation for this conjecture of identity of the early disciples with the Ebionites, the Greek word for this designation, "ptochos," usually translated "poor" and "beggar," occurs in the New Testament in a manner which often suggests that the Ebionites are meant by the designation.

"Happy the poor in spirit," says the Sermon on the Mount; "for the kingdom of the heavens is theirs." "The gospel is preached to them" was the message sent to John the Baptist in his prison at Macheras. "If thou wilt be perfect," says Jesus to the young man, "go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." In the Gospel according to St Luke (6: 20) Jesus actually addresses his disciples as "ye poor," or Ebionim. Lazarus is called *Ptochos, or Ebioni*, in the sixteenth chapter. Paul sternly rebukes the Galatian Christians for their conversion to Ebionism: "But then, not having seen God, you were servants to those that are not gods; but now having known God, or rather having been known by God, why do you turn about again to the weak and beggarly elements?"

Nevertheless, the conclusion of Eusebius, that the Essenes or Therapeutæ were only Christians of the apostolic age, is impossible. They were of greater
(260) antiquity, and flourished when Christians—or *Chrestians*, whichever they may be—had never been heard of. The converse is more probable by far—that the apostles and their Ebionite followers were religionists after the form of the Essenes.

We have indicated the evident similarity of these sectaries with the Mithraic initiates, and the fact has also been shown that many of the Christians of the first centuries also observed the rites of that worship. That the astrological features of each were identical and are manifest in the story of Jesus has also been illustrated. We may now treat the final question, that of the person of Jesus himself.

It is the easiest way just now to concede his physical existence, and reject the marvels, exaggerations, and other incredibilities of the Gospel narratives. A Roman Catholic writer of great acuteness has marked out that very course. He explains his position so aptly that we will reproduce the principal features, which certainly seem in a great degree to sustain our proposition. "Where intellect sees an idea, an abstraction," says he, "religion sees a person. This involves a superior development of the consciousness; inasmuch while intellect of itself, having neither motive nor force, could not have created, personality includes intellect and all else that is indispensable to action—namely, feeling and energy."

He sets forth Christianity as a religion in Palestine "which consisted in the worship of a Divine Being incarnated in human form in order to redeem fallen

(261) man, born of a virgin, teaching immortality, working wonders of benevolence, dying through the hostile machinations of the spirit of evil, rising from death, reascend-ing into heaven, and becoming judge of the dead. As representative of the sun the festivals appointed in his honor were fixed in accordance with the seasons, his birth being at the end of the winter solstice; his death at the spring equinox; his rising soon afterward, and then his ascension into heaven, whence he showers down benefits on man."

The same author indicates the Essenes as cherishing these beliefs: "Deriving their tenets from the East, they believed in the Persian dualism, regarded the sun as the impersonation of the Supreme Light, and worshipped it in a modified way." He adds: "To the sect of the Essenes the originals of John the Baptist and Jesus must have belonged."

"We may possess a trustworthy account of the spirit that was in Jesus," he says again, "and yet be altogether in the dark respecting his precise sayings and doings. The condition of the world at this period being such as I have described, it was inevitable that any impressive personality whose career enabled such things, with however small a modicum of truth, to be predicated of it as were predicated of Jesus, should be seized upon and appropriated to the purposes of a new religion....

"For the masses the spectacle of an heroic crusade against the authority, respectability, and pharisaism of an established ecclesiasticism, combined with
(262) complete self-devotion, with teaching of the most absolute perfection in morals—a perfection readily recognizable by the intuitive perceptions of all—and with a confident mysticism that seemed to imply unbounded supernatural knowledge—*all characteristics of the sect of Essenes to which he and the Baptist manifestly belonged*,—these were amply sufficient to win belief in Jesus as a divine personage. And especially so when they found him persistently reported not only as having performed miracles in his life, but as having shown that traditional superiority to all the limitation of humanity which was ascribed to their previous divinities by rising from the dead and ascending into heaven. Familiar as they were with the notion of incarnations in which the sun played a principal part, and accustomed to associate such events with virgin mothers impregnated by deities, births in stables or caves, hazardous careers in the exercise of benevolence, violent deaths, and descents into the kingdom of darkness, resurrections and ascensions into heaven, to be followed by the descent of blessings upon mankind,—it required but the suggestion that Jesus of Nazareth was a new and nobler incarnation of the Deity, who had so often before been incarnate and put to death for man's salvation, to transfer to him the whole paraphernalia of doctrine and rite deemed appropriate to the office."

There appears no reasonable doubt of the relationship of Jesus to the Essenean brothers. Not only does the name itself imply a personification of that pe-

(263) culiar people, but he is represented as uttering their distinctive doctrines. In the Sermon on the Mount he required from his disciples, as did the Essenean teachers, a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and the Beatitudes are distinctly of the same character. He prohibits the oath, as the Esseneans also did, enjoined non-resistance to violent assault and forgiveness of injuries, and exhorted to take no thought for the morrow, which he described as serving Mammon. He also charged against divulging the interior doctrines, comparing it to giving the holy bread to dogs and casting pearls to the swine, the latter treading the precious jewels under foot and the dogs turning to rend the giver. Indeed, the whole discourse is one which a teacher of the fraternity would deliver to candidates. "These things," he declares, "are hid from the wise and prudent, but are revealed to babes." When his disciples demur at his rigid tenets in regard to marriage, permitting divorce only for lewdness or false religion, he sanctions their inference that it is not good to marry. "He that is able to receive this doctrine," added he, "let him receive it." To the young man who desired to know the way to perfection he first gave a reproof for calling him good when there was no one so but the one God, and then commanded him to sell all his possessions and give to the *poor*, probably meaning the *Ebionim*. In the parable in Luke the rich man after death is tormented, while the other, the *ptochos* or Ebionite Lazarus, is compensated in the lap of Abraham. Yet except the few cases when the terms "brethren"
(264) and "disciple" are used there are few direct references to the Essenes. But he is continually exhorting against the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and denouncing the former. Meanwhile, he nowhere fills a page in history. He has left no mark of his individual existence.

We have observed that Judaism was chiefly the counterpart of Persian Mazdaism, the Supreme Being, the seven Amesha-spentas, Yazatas, Evil Spirit and devas, being reproduced in Jehovah with his angels and seven archangels, Satan and his wicked crew. Essenism, in turn, appears to have been a form of the Persian religion, including the worship of the sun, astral and prophetic doctrines, occult science, a cultus and sacraments; and as the Persian doctrines were ascribed to the unknown Zarathustra, so those of the Essenean brotherhood are personified in the character of a gifted teacher, born on the natal day of Mithras, inculcating truth and right action, and in every way representing and personifying the religious system. This was, as has been observed, a common practice in former times. As soon as we consider *Jesus as Essenism personified* we find the difficulties vanish which every other theory presents. But Essenism was much older than the Christian era, despite the pretense of Eusebius of the absolute identity of Essenes and the early Christians. We may also remark that there are fragments of books in existence which treat of a Jew, the son of a soldier and temple-woman, who exhibits characteristics of the Jesus of the Gospels sufficient to intimate the iden-

(265) tity of the two. They place his career in the time of the earlier Asmonean kings, about the period when the Essenes are first mentioned by that name. We do not attach great importance to these works, except for the fact that they would not have appeared, unless there had existed a comprehensive account of some kind, parabolic or historic, to suggest their preparation. The *Toldoth Jeshu*, or Generations of Jesus, to which we refer, has several characteristics which are worth noting. The father of Jesus, being a soldier, probably denoted a "soldier of Mithras," and the alma or Blessed Virgin, a Hebrew maiden set apart for a time, as was the practice for young maids in Athens, to work and be initiated at the temple. It is also asserted that Jesus spent a season in Egypt, where he learned magic. The Therapeutæ had communes in that country as well as in Arabia and Palestine, and were addicted to the study of medical knowledge, astrology, and other arts, which, being derived from the Magi or priest-caste of the East, were denominated magic. This term originally carried with it no reproachful meaning, but meant all learning of a liberal character, and occult science was only such knowledge as was considered too sacred for profane individuals. "He who pours water into a muddy well," says Jamblichus, "does but disturb the mud." Doubtless the primitive Essenean gospel described Jesus as a young man of rare qualities, the son of a Mithraic or Essenean adept, who was instructed at the school of Alexandria or in the priest-colleges of ancient Egypt, and became expert in the technic of religious and scientific wisdom. Thus, the great Siddartha was taught by the Jaina sage Mahavira before he became himself a teacher and a sage. As the sacraments of the Church are like the observances of the Essenes and those which are also celebrated at the Mithraic initiations, this is abundantly plausible. The departure made by Paul and others from the methods of the order afford the reason for the assigned origin of Christianity at the period known as the "year of our Lord," *Anno Domini.*

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The original books from which the Gospels were compiled have perished. There was a Gospel in the possession of the Ebionites carefully guarded as a sacred or arcane book, a copy of which Jerome procured with great difficulty, but which has since been lost and forgotten. The sect disappeared, melting away into the church or the synagogue, and we now read of them loaded with the opprobrious slanders of Irenæus and Epiphanius. They were the original disciples in Judea, and were subjected, in common with other Jews, to the hardships and persecutions which followed upon the destruction of the national polity. This Hebrew Gospel and such writings as the Catholic Epistles of James and Peter contained their peculiar doctrines. They regarded Jesus as a teacher or exemplar, but not as a superhuman being in any sense of the term. That notion came from the pagans.

Indeed, it was not their belief that such a man had literally existed. The Doketæ (or Illusionists) held that he was a symbolic being, an ideality. The Gnos-

(267) tics generally, whom Gibbon describes as "the most polite, the most learned, and most wealthy of the Christian name," described him as an *aion* or spiritual principle; and considered the crucifixion as metaphorical and not a literal event. The real Christ, Chrëstos or divine principle, they regarded as still in heaven, intact.

The apostle Paul was the great innovator upon the Ebionite and Essenean doctrines. He was too broad and far-seeing to overlook the fact that the exclusiveness of Judaism would arrest any universal dissemination of the faith in the world. Hence he struck out boldly on his own account. He had a gospel, he declares to the Galatians, which he had received from no man; it was not "*according* to any man," but a distinct, differentiated matter, the apocalypse of Jesus Christ. "Let the man, or even angel, that preaches any other gospel be anathema," he declares. He did not hesitate to denounce the Ebionist apostles, nor they in turn to set him forth as an impostor, holding the doctrine of Balaam and teaching faith without works or rites. At Antioch he withstood Peter to the face, and declares him condemned. Writing to the Corinthians, he denounces the schisms and deprecates the influence of Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria. "I, the wise architect, have laid the foundation," says he, "but another has built upon it. That foundation is Christ." It is very plain, however, that the Christ that he taught was rather an ideal than a literal personage. "I have seen the Lord," he declares, and again avows that he preached "Jesus Christ and the Crucified One." Yet when he refers to the
(268) death and resurrection he always treats of them as figurative matters, pertaining to the spiritual and not to the corporeal nature. A Christ that he had seen could but be a spiritual entity. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he declares, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This is a complete setting aside of any gross, literal sense to be given to his language. Others who received the gospel were crucified as Christ was, and rose again to a new life while yet embodied in mortal flesh. He was the type, the model, the exemplar, and they who believed were walking in his footsteps. "Know ye not," he asks the Roman believers, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We then are buried with him by this baptism into his death; so that as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we should walk in a new life. For if we have become planted together in the likeness of his death, we are also, on the other hand, in that of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man was crucified together, that the body of sin might be made inert, that we may no longer be enslaved to sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live to him; being aware that Christ having risen from the dead is no longer dying, death no longer rules him. For wherein he died, he died to sin once for all; but wherein he lives, he lives to God. So likewise reckon ye yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

(209) A spiritual crucifixion, death, and resurrection, in strict analogy with the equinoctial crucifixion, death, and resurrection of the mystic rites, is the foremost idea of this passage. The baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan and his forty days' temptation in the wilderness were of the same character. There was no literal dying signified in the case. Indeed, nobody knew better than Paul that the Jewish Sanhedrim did not sit and that capital punishments were not inflicted at the period of the Passover, the day of the crucifixion, being, according to the law, "a day of holy convocation." The crucifixion being figurative and suggested by an astrological period, we are fully warranted in the hypothesis that the victim likewise was a symbolic personage of an astral character.

This ideal Jesus, with the emphatic but ambiguous phrase of Paul—"Him crucified"—was not sufficient for the exigencies of the Christian leaders of the subsequent century. The Gnostics and other cultured men were satisfied, but the lower classes wanted a more tangible character, a physical corporeity. The great want, therefore, was some proof of the literal existence of the individual by the evidence of men that had seen him and been familiar with him. This was now furnished by the production of the three synoptic Gospels and their adoption in the place of other evangelical literature. Afterward, Irenæus or some one with his approval added the Gospel according to John. The fiction of an apostolic succession was then originated, and forgery for religious purposes was a general practice.
(270) The quarrels of Christians with Christians were for centuries more scandalous than all the atrocities of actual martyrdom.

Previous to this the Church had labored indefatigably and successfully to destroy the influence and reputation of Paul. He was now taken into favor; his Epistles were revised, interpolated, toned down, and accepted as canonical. The Acts of the Apostles was next produced. It is a work in two parts—one set apart to the story of the apostle Peter, and the other to the achievements of Paul. The purpose evidently was to indicate that the two were not at variance, but were laborers in the same field. The work of harmonizing must have been difficult. In our day it would not have been possible. Books cannot be got out of the way as in former centuries, and inconsistencies of writers are sure to be exposed.

Justin Martyr lived at Rome in the reign of the Antonines and wrote a *Defence of the Christians*. Yet he makes no mention of "St. Peter the first bishop." He had never heard of him. Irenæus, however, did not hesitate to say anything to advance the gospel, and accordingly boldly asserts that Peter and Paul founded the church at Rome; overlooking their reciprocal animosity, and the fact that the Epistle of Paul to the Romans addresses the "saints," but makes no mention of a church. Claudius had banished the Jews from Rome for their turbulent conduct under the instigations of Chrestos, and the emperors Trajan and Adrian seem to have known of Christians only from information which they had derived solely from

(271) the provinces in the East. But all this made no difficulty for Irenæus. This French prelate also declared that the ministry of Jesus lasted upward of ten years; also that he lived to be an elderly man. The anachronisms and bad geography of the Gospels are notorious, but they do not compare with the absurdities of Irenæus. He invented the name *Antichrist*, and hurled it with ferocious rage whenever he had been assailed and hard pushed in controversy. He was never so much in his element as when quarrelling; and his designation of Irenæus (a man of peace) is one of the most stupendous misnomers ever heard of.

We have alluded to the fact that passages had been interpolated into the Epistles of Paul. The object was to harmonize the Logos of Philo and his school with the Christ or Chrêstos of the apostle. It would have been a futile attempt if it had been made when Paul was castigating the Corinthian Christians in regard to Apollos. A dead man's words, however, can be mutilated and perverted without his resistance. We accordingly find the sturdy Hebrew diction of the apostle interlarded with Gnostic utterances, and new epistles purporting to have been written by him which give a different complexion to his doctrines. The *pleroma* or fulness which is treated of in the Epistle to the Ephesians was taken bodily from the Gnostics.

The pre-existence of Christ as the Creator of the world was asserted in a spurious document purporting to be a letter from him to the Colossians, and interpo-
(272) lations of a corresponding nature were made in the genuine Corinthian Epistles. Thus in the famous chapter on the resurrection we find the following sentiment of Philo in an amplified form: "Man, being freed by the *Logos* (or Word) from all corruption, shall be entitled to immortality."

Gibbon has shown us that the first regular church government was instituted at Alexandria. This is in keeping with the other facts. The dogmas of an incarnate God, of the Trinity, and the sacred character of the Blessed Virgin were all introduced into the creed by the influence of the Alexandrians, and it would therefore seem to be legitimately their right to institute the government. We have noticed already that the Therapeutæ of that country had offices with similar titles and functions as those now possessed by officers of the Church, and as they and the Christians were closely allied, we have good reason for the belief that they had united with the new organization in such numbers as to outvote the original members. Certain it is, that thenceforth the names of Essenes and Therapeutæ occurred no more. But the sect which gave shape to the concept had thus, to a certain degree at least, resumed control over the whole matter.

That such an individual as Jesus Christ ever lived is entirely without proof from history. We find Josephus making mention of one and another who acquired notoriety. He describes Judas of Galilee as the founder of a fourth philosophic sect,
(273) and tells of Jesus the son of Hanan who predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and

its temple years before it occurred. We observe similarity enough in his utterances to those of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and in his deportment when brought before the Roman governor to that described in the Gospels, to warrant some little surmise of identity with the Jesus of the Gospels. But of Jesus as the founder of the Christian religion, or more properly the Ebionite sect, we have no such delineation. Of him we have only an utterance which is a palpable forgery.

This preaching of Jesus as a veritable individual of like passions with other men, having a will not always consonant with the divine will, and yet divine in qualities and attributes, has been very justly "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness." Intelligent men, however reverent and impartial, have been compelled to dissent. The fanatic Tertullian in declaring his own position gave utterance to what many felt to be the substance of the whole matter: "I reverence it because it is contemptible; I adore it because it is absurd; I believe it because it is impossible." We are outgrowing a faith and veneration so utterly childlike as to be fatuity itself.

If we search for Jesus at Nazareth in Galilee, we shall not find a footprint. If, however, we look for him in the testimonies of the Nazarim and Essenes as the personification of their school of philosophic thought, thus representing in concept the emanation of God and the evolution of man as a spiritual being, we
(274) shall see him as he is. Hence to surrender the popular notion of a literal man as an infallible teacher and exemplar is not to renounce anything that is vital in truth. We will only dispense with the paganism and raan-worship. We eliminate the sensuous imagery, but preserve intact the life, the power, and the energy. The parables and aphorisms which are in the Gospels are as true, as wholesome, and inspiring as ever. Jesus the ideal represents, and will continue to represent, all that was implied in the arcane religions in the East. Upon this ground, therefore, it is well that Christianity in its external forms as well as in its esoteric principles should supplant the other worships. It repeats what there is of value in them, and at the same time it comes more closely home to the higher consciousness. In the personification of Jesus the true ideal of our humanity is suggested. We are born of our earthly father and mother, whose image and name we accordingly inherit, and we have to pass through the pains and throes of a second birth as children of the celestial parent. This was outlined distinctly by symbols in the initiations, and the successful candidate, having overcome in the trial, was enthroned and acknowledged as the son of the Most High. Hence Jesus sets forth in the Gospel the last disclosure of the Esseneân rite: "Call no man father on the earth, for one is your Father; he is in the heavens; and you are brothers." Paul repeats the sentiment in other words: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." This idea, often too much
(275) lost sight of, lies at the core of all real knowledge. The end of all worship, all

philosophic discipline, and all religious teaching is to open the way in every mind to a higher perception and a profounder conscientiousness.

Yet the suggestion of the angel at the sepulchre is pertinent—that we forbear to seek for the living among the dead. The real enlightenment of mankind comes not from teachers, but only from the fountains of interior illumination. We have no call or occasion to go to this man or to that man as a leader. It may be the province of individuals to stand out conspicuously in order to indicate the next advance to be made. But when each has thus performed his service, his glory is outshone by the refulgent light which he has induced others to seek and obtain.

We require no display of spiritual pyrotechnics. Enough for us that there is truth, and that we have the intellect to perceive it—that there is right, and we have the will to obey it. Neither a human God nor a divine man can enlighten us further than this. There are freedom and impulse for us to attain the highest degree of illumination of which we are capable. The human aspiration soars beyond the path of the lightning. In every noble idea, every worthy desire, we have a mediator with God. The more silent the work, the more certain that the principle
(276) of all life is performing it. In this is our eternity, and there is nothing beyond.

CHAPTER XI. THE IDEAL CHRIST

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son was he?"—Matt. 22: 42.

NEARLY a quarter of a century ago (1868) a very remarkable pamphlet was published by request of the Free Religious Association, written by that remarkable man, the Rev. Samuel Johnson, a Unitarian minister and an author of no little repute. The subject was *The Worship of Jesus.* It had a very limited circulation, and the stereotype plates were destroyed in the great Boston fire, and it is now very difficult to find a copy.

Mr. Johnson takes the ground that "Christianity is a temporary step in the divine growth of man through the worship of the ideal; and this hope lies, not in pausing on this step as final, nor in proving the names and personalities associated

with it to be as valid for ever as they have been in the past, but in that which underlies and governs the whole process—*the law of religious idealization.*

"This is no speculation; it is the positive law of progress, as history presents it. To worship ideals is the condition of spiritual life. To lose belief that there
(277) is somewhere a better than ourselves is to gravitate downward to what is worse than ourselves. We grow better by definite homage to a best. And this worship of ideals is a process of idealization.... Man's power of growth, therefore, resides in the ability to shift his veneration....

"Ideals prove themselves to be idealizations, that they may point him on to higher levels. This is religious progress....

"So a time comes when every religion that centres in an individual's prerogative of divinity falls under criticism, and is, so far, referred to temporary causes. Christianity cannot escape this law. As a distinct religion it is but Christism, and passes away, like Jehovism, before a broader faith. Whether what succeeds it be called Theism or Pantheism, this terminology of systems fails to express its scope. It is free worship of the one infinite and eternal life of the spiritual, moral, and physical universe....

"How, then, did the concentration of the religious sentiment upon Jesus originate? Not, as the Church insists, in the undeniable rights of a perfect Being to the everlasting allegiance of mankind, for there is no evidence of his perfection, intellectual or spiritual, but in the fact that the religious sentiment, at a certain stage of its historical progress, demanded a single human centre, and knew how to satisfy its own demand by its own process of idealization.

"The ideal itself was sent in the soul of the age. It was bound to do what it
(278) would with its materials by its own divine gift. It was the creative force of the time. It is not the whole truth to say with Merivale, then, that(the religion of Christ seized and developed, with a divine energy, the latent yearnings of mankind for social combination, having for its essence, in a human point of view, the doctrine of the equality of man/ Rather did that religion catch a spirit of universality already abroad in the age—not latent, but mighty to transform society, to inspire both Hebrew Messiah and Gentile philosopher, *to make its god in its own image*, and to transform the little Jewish sect at last into a Church of civilization....

"And this, at least, is sure; always there is a man for the hour. Somehow or other, a great demand will find satisfaction. But the man is not what the hour reports him when it has crowned him with all that faith and fancy can bestow, and set up, through him, its own special demand as valid for all time. Future ages will revise, from a freer standpoint, the image it transmits for their adoration....

"The earliest types and emblems of Christ-worship betray this powerful element in its origination. Jesus is represented in the form of the old deities and in conjunction with them. Between the images of Mercury Criophorus and Apollo

Nomius, and that of the 'Good Shepherd/ the transition is so gradual that it is hard to decide whether the picture is pagan or Christian. In the Catacombs Jesus sits as Pluto on the judgment-seat, with Mary as Proserpine, while Mercury leads
(279) in souls. Still earlier emblems of Jesus, the Lamb, the Fish, the Ship, the Cross, the Dove, are all associated with older heathen mysteries or mythological beliefs, as are also the Christian festivals and rites.

"And so the idealization of Jesus went on steadily and consistently till it reached deification. The early Christian 'apologists' ridiculed the human gods of the old polytheism, yet they did but concentrate the same principle more perfectly in the form of their Christ. Hebrew monotheism was indeed too strong in Paul to allow of his finding in Jesus more than a man in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt. But this hovers very close upon the larger desire of the nations. And later, in the Gospel of John, the Gentile current has absorbed the Hebrew and the call for a God-man is boldly met. A life of Jesus is here dramatically constructed, not out of historical facts, nor even traditions, but out of that preconceived ideal of an incarnate word attaching itself, in its longing for actual and living substance, to the growing prestige of his name....

"The records of Jesus' life have had to be idealized also; and these are not, like his person, so dim and veiled as to leave the religions imagination a certain margin of freedom, however inadequate, but a definite statement of doctrines, doings, and claims; so that science, philosophy, art, and morality have been taught to bow in his name to the limitations of half-developed times and men.

"It is not denied that by leaving out what we dislike we can find in the New-Testament Jesus as noble an ideal as we will, though it can be only of a
(280) purely interior individualism, unrelated to practical and political functions. But we cannot ignore the many sources, apart from the real life of Jesus, from which this feast of good things has been derived. The New Testament is, in fact, not so much the record of a life as the fruit of two ancient civilizations, the Oriental and Greek, of whose confluence Christianity itself was the product....

"It is urged that we destroy the basis of religious unity when we take away this historical and personal centre of faith. Men absolutely need, it is said, that concrete form, that individuality, under which the divine is represented to them in the Christ. There would be more cause for this anxiety if it could be shown that they have ever possessed such a centre. But what have they had, after all, but a common name for ever-changing ideals? The belief that all eyes were turned to a common authoritative centre was an illusion, which had its uses, indeed, but becomes a breeder of strife in proportion as men learn the rights of free inquiry. 'Worship the Christ! follow Jesus!' cry the ages. But who is Jesus? and what is the Christ? The Jesus of Matthew is one, the Christ of John is another, the 'second Adam' of Paul is a third. The moral as well as the theological contents of the name

vary with the ages and the sects that appeal to it. As the Christ of Luther was not the Christ of Augustine, nor his the Christ of James, so the Christ of the Unitarian is one, of the Calvinist another. Whom the one will save, the other will destroy;
(281) what to the one is moral wrong, to the other is divine right; what love would require in the one, justice would foreclose in the other. What common centre can the liberal Bible scholars and the panic-stricken, text-ridden Revivalists find in the name of Christ? All the warring sects have been 'standing up for Jesus;' and which of them knows what Jesus was? The farther you get back toward the original, the less sure do you feel of your own knowledge, and the less right should you feel from what you know in part to assume that you have found the appointed centre of religious thought. It would be easy to show that unity is impossible so long as it is sought to found it on the claims of a person to that position, since the mysterious irrationality of such an office must keep the speculative faculties of mankind in ceaseless self-contradiction and strife. It would be easy to show that this claim of Jesus has been the perpetual root of dogmatic warfare—that all barbarism of the Christian Church in past ages has come of jealousy about the honor due the person of the Christ." We offer no apology for these long extracts from Mr. Johnson's inimitable little book of ninety pages. "He being dead yet speaketh," and his words give no uncertain sound. He was in advance of the times, and if his brethren in the Unitarian ministry would regard Jesus, whom they almost deify, as an *ideal* (quite imperfect) that has come down to us from pagan peoples, and cease to court the favor of the orthodox, they would have
(282) more self-respect and more real regard from the thinking men of the age.

We might as well now come directly to the question whether the Jesus of the Gospels was an *ideal* rather than a historical individual—an *impersonation* rather than a person. And here we take the broad ground that whether there was a real man or not makes no difference whatever, because the writings themselves are largely *ideal*, and so make the man what he was not. No two persons worship the same God, the "personified Infinite." The conception of God must itself be limited and incomplete, and therefore inadequate and largely ideal. No two persons believe in the same Jesus, so there must be as many ideals as there are believers. The habit of exaggerating, of deifying those whom we have been taught to regard as the greatest and best, is a well-known disposition of the human mind. Indeed, "the function of the Church is the cultivation of the ideal." This is so palpable that the legends of all religions recognize this principle to such an extent that most of them represent their "saviors" as having been born of virgin mothers. Catholics flock to their temples and in parrot-like utterances worship an ideal Jesus and an equally ideal Virgin, and thus cultivate only the ideal side of their nature. It is very much easier to excite the imagination than to convince the understanding; and this is the real secret of the strength of Catholicism and of the weakness of Protes-

tantism. Catholic worship is mainly spectacular, an appeal to the senses, and is therefore attractive alike to the uneducated and the educated. They believe the
(283) Gospels *literally*, because they have had the principal incidents recorded in them set forth before their eyes from their very birth, and they cannot be reasoned out of what they have never been reasoned into.

But we are told that Jesus must have been a real person or he never could have exerted the influence that he has for the last eighteen hundred years upon so many millions of people. Let us see: If Jesus ever dwelt upon this earth, it must have been several hundred years ago. Not one of the many millions who have worshipped him since his few years of sojourn here but have done so in view of what they have heard of him or read of him. They never saw him and never heard his voice. He wrote nothing, and never authorized any one else to write anything. After the lapse of nearly two centuries the four Gospels appeared. Very little is told of him there. If you take out what is repeated concerning him therein, you would not have, in length, what would make a modern sermon; and that would be found full of contradictions, absurdities, and impossibilities. Those who have believed on him have believed on what they called *testimony* concerning him; and that testimony would have produced the same effect whether true or false if they really *believed* it. The real existence of an alleged person is not essential to excite admiration if it is really *believed* that he existed. The Swiss loved and honored William Tell just as much as if he had not in these latter years been proved a myth. The world's history teems with the heroic deeds of many noble persons
(284) (impersonations) who never had an existence, and the literature of the race would greatly suffer by striking out all that is fictitious. The reason that the ideal Christ has exerted so much greater influence than any other impersonation is because so many skilful artists have bestowed their best labor upon it, and because the figure is so ancient and contains so many features that commend themselves to the human mind and heart.

We find in *Natural Genesis*, by the English poet Gerald Massey, a passage which so beautifully portrays our own view of this subject that we cannot forbear copying it:

"It has often been said that if there were no historic Christ then the writers who represented such a conception of the divine man must have included amongst them one who was equal to the Christ. But the mythical Christ was not the outcome of any such conception. It was not a work of the individual mind at all, but of the human race—a crowning result of evolution *versus* any private conception of a hero. This was the hero of all men, who never was and was never meant to be human, but from the beginning was divine; a mythical hero without mortal model, and equally without fault or flaw. This was the star-god who dawned through the outermost darkness; this was the moon-god who brought the message of renewal

and immortality; this was the sun-god who came with the morning to all men; this in the Kronian stage was the announcer of new life and endless continuity at
(285) the opening of every cycle, and in the psychotheistic phase the typical son of the Eternal as manifester and representative in time.

"As a mental model the Christ was elaborated by whole races of men, and worked at continually, like the Apollo of Greek sculpture. Various nations wrought at this ideal, which long-continued repetition evoked from the human mind at last as it did the Greek god from the marble.

"Egypt labored at the portrait for thousands of years before the Greeks added their finishing touches to the type of the ever-youthful solar god. It was Egypt that first made the statue live with her own life, and humanized her ideal of the divine. Hers was the legend of supreme pity and self-sacrifice so often told of the canonical Christ. She related how the very god did leave the courts of heaven and come down as a little child, the infant Horus born of the Virgin, through whom he took flesh or descended into matter, < crossed the earth as a substitute/ descended into Hades as the vivifier of the dead, their vicarious justifier and redeemer, the first-fruits and leader of the resurrection into eternal life. The Christian legends were first related of Horus, or Osiris, who was the embodiment of divine goodness, wisdom, truth, and purity—who personated ideal perfection in each sphere of manifestation and every phase of power. This was the greatest hero that ever lived in the mind of man—not in the flesh—to influence with transforming force; the only hero to whom the miracles were natural because he
(286) was not human. The canonical Christ only needed a translator, not a creator, a transcriber of the 'sayings' and a collector of the 'doings' already ascribed to the mythical Christ.

"The humanized history is but the mythical drama made mundane. The sayings and marvellous doings of Christ being pre-extant, the 'spirit of Christ,' the 'secret of Christ,' the 'sweet reasonableness of Christ' were all pre-Christian, and consequently could not be derived from any 'personal founder' of Christianity. They were extant before the great delusion had turned the minds of men and the figure-head of Peter's bark had been mistaken for a portrait of the builder.

"The Christ of the Gospels is in no sense an historical personage or a supreme model of humanity—a hero who strove, and suffered, and failed to save the world by his death. It is impossible to establish the existence of an historical character even as an impostor. For such an one the two witnesses, astronomical mythology and Gnosticism, completely prove an alibi. The Christ is a popular lay figure that never lived, and a lay figure of pagan origin—a lay figure that was once the Ram and afterward the Fish; a lay figure that in human form was the portrait and image of a dozen different gods.

"The imagery of the Catacombs shows that the types there represented are not the ideal figures of the human reality. They are the sole reality of the centuries after the Christian era, because they had been in the centuries long before. The symbolism, the allegories, the figures, and types remained there just what
(287) they were to the Romans, Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians, The iconography of the Catacombs absolutely proves that the lay figure, as Christ, must have sat for the portraits of Osiris, Horus the child, Mithras, Bacchus, Aristæus, Apollo, Pan, the Good Shepherd. The lay figure or type is one all through. The portraits are manifold, yet they all mean the mythical Christ under whatsoever name.

"The typical Christ, so far from being derived from the model man, has been made up from the features of many gods, after a fashion somewhat similar to those 'pictorial averages' portrayed by Mr. Galton, in which the characteristics of various persons are photographed and fused in a portrait—a composite likeness of twenty different persons merged in one that is not *anybody*.

"It is pitiful to track the poor faithful gleaners who picked up every fallen fragment or scattered waif and stray of the mythos, and to watch how they treasured every trait and tint of the ideal Christ to make up the personal portrait of their own supposed real one. His mother, like the other forms of the queen of heaven, had the color of the *mater frugum*, the complexion of the golden corn; and a Greek Father of the eighth century cites an early tradition of the Christians concerning the *personnel* of the Christ to the effect that in taking the form of Adam he assumed features exactly like those of the Virgin, and his face was of a *wheaten color*, like that of his mother. That is, he (the seed) was *corn-complexioned*,
(288) as was the mother of corn, like Flava Keres, Aurea Venus, the Golden Lakshmi, the Yellow Neitli; and the son was her seed, which in Egypt was the corn brought forth at the vernal equinox, and which was continued in the cult of Rome as the 'bread-corn of the elect.'

"In the chapter of 'knowing the spirits of the East' the Osirified assumes the type of the virile and hairy Horus, the divine hawk of the resurrection. This is called the type under which he desires to appear before all men; and it is said, 'his hair is on his shoulder when he proceeds to the heaven.' This long hair of the adult Horus reaching down to the shoulders is a typical feature in the portraits of the Messiah, the copy of the Kamite Christ made permanent by the art of the Gnostics. The halo of Christ is the glory of the sun-god seen in his phantom phase when the more physical type had become psychotheistic. Hence it is worn by the child-Christ as the *karast* mummy. It is the same halo that illumined Horus and Iu-em-hept, Krishna and Buddha, and others of whom the same old tales of deliverance and redemption were told and believed. Yet the dummy ideal of paganism is supposed to have become doubly real as the man-god standing with one foot in two worlds—one resting on the ground of the fall from heaven, and

the other on the physical resurrection from the earth."

It is a well-known fact that many early Christian sects absolutely denied the existence of Christ in the flesh, regarding him as a phantom. It is very difficult
(289) to decide whether the apostle Paul believed in a real or an ideal Christ. He wrote his Epistles before the Gospels were written, and therefore could have learned nothing from that source. Concerning the various appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, he says: "Last of all, he was seen of me, as by one born out of due time," and this seems to bear out the conjecture that Jesus was an ideal, inasmuch as it was not in the flesh that he saw him, and his refusal to know him after the flesh indicates his strong preference for him as an idea, and not as a person. Paul makes no mention of any miracle but that of the resurrection, and that was manifestly a spiritual rather than a physical fact. Moreover, he was a Pharisee, and it is difficult to see how he could have "gloried in the cross" had he taken the cross in a literal sense. He casts no reproach on the Jews for causing Jesus to suffer, and never speaks of the crucifixion as a crime, nor shows a particle of sympathy or compassion with the sufferer. He seems to have been the real founder of Christianity, and might have had in view the direct action of the solar divinity with whom Christ had become associated.

A careful analysis of the Pauline Epistles will show, we think, that the Christ of Paul was an idea. And here it is important to bear in mind that those who attributed to him at least ten Epistles he never wrote would not scruple to alter, amend, interpolate, and change portions of the Epistles he actually did write. Those who formed the system of Christian ecclesiasticism never could afford to have a conscience. Those Fathers of the second century who formed the foundations of the Catholic hierarchy were most unscrupulous men.
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Of the *Gnostics*, Mr. Gerald Massey speaks as follows:

"The ancient wisdom of Egypt and Chaldea lived on with the men who knew, called the Gnostics. They had directly inherited the gnosis that remained oral, the sayings uttered from mouth to ear that were to be unwritten, the mysteries performed in secret, the science kept concealed. The continuity of the astronomical mythos of Equinoctial Christolatry and of the total typology is proved by the persistence of the type—the ancient genitrix, the two sisters, the hebdomad of inferior and superior powers, the trinity in unity represented by *Iao* the tetrads male and female, the double Horus, or Horus and Stauros, the system of Æôns, the Karaite divinities, Harpocrates and Sut-Anubis, Isis and Hathor. Theirs was the Christ not made flesh, but the manifester of the seven powers and perfect star of the pleroma. The figure of eight, which is a sign of the Nnu or associate gods in Egypt, who were the primary Ogdoad, is reproduced as a gnostic symbol, a figure of the pleroma and fellow-type of the eight-rayed star. The 'Lamb of God' was a gnostic sign. 'Lord, thou art the Lamb' (and 'our Light') was a gnostic formula.

The 'Immaculate Virgin' was a gnostic type. On one of the sard stones Isis stands before Serapis holding the sistrum in one hand, in the other a wheatsheaf, the legend being 'Immaculate is our Lady Isis,' which proves the continuity from Kam.

(291) "It was gnostic art that reproduced the Hathor-Meri and Horus of Egypt as the Virgin and child-Christ of Rome, and the icons of characters entirely ideal which served as the sole portraits of the *historical* Madonna and Jesus the Christ. The report of Irenæus sufficed to show the survival of the true tradition. He complains of the oral wisdom of the Gnostics, and says rightly they read from things unwritten—i. e. from sources unknown to him and the Fathers in general. Chief of these sources was the science of astronomy. He testifies that Marcus was skilled in this form of the gnosis, and enables us to follow the line of unbroken continuity, and to confute his own assertion that Gnosticism had no existence prior to Marcion and Valentinus; which shows he did not know, or else he denied the fact, that the Suttites, the Mandaites, the Essenes, and Nazarenes were all Gnostics; all of which sects preceded the cult of the carnalized Christ. Hippolytus informs us that Elkesai said the Christ born of a Virgin was *œonian.* The Elkesites maintained that Jesus the Christ had continually transformed and manifested in various bodies at many different times. This shows they also were in possession of the gnosis, and that the Christ and his repeated incarnations were Kronian. Hence we are told that they occupied themselves 'with a bustling activity in regard to astronomical science.' Epiphanius also bears witness that the head and front of the gnostic boast was astronomy, and that Manes wrote a work on astronomy, astronomy being the
(292) root of the whole matter concerning Equinoctial Christolatry. "Nothing is more astounding, on their own showing, than the ignorance of the Fathers about the nature, the significance, the descent of Gnosticism, and its rootage in the remotest past. They knew nothing of evolution or the survival of types, and for them the new beginning with Christ carnalized obliterated all that preceded. Such a thing as priority, natural genesis, or the doctrine of development did not trouble those who considered that the more the myth the greater was the miracle which proved the divinity.

"Also, it has been asserted from the time of Irenæus down to that of Mansel that the Gnostic heretics of the second century invented a number of spurious Gospels in imitation of or in opposition to the true gospel of Christ, which has descended to us as canonical, authentic, and historic. This is a popular delusion, false enough to damn all belief in it from the beginning until now. The ignorance of the past manifested by men like Irenæus is the measure of the value of their testimony to the origines of Equinoctial Christolatry. They who pretend to know all concerning the founding and the founder know nothing of the foundations....

"Gnosticism, according to those who are ignorant of its origin and relationships, was supposed and assumed to have originated in the second century; the first being carefully avoided, only proves that the A-Gnostics, who had literally adopted the pre-Christian types, and believed they had been historically fulfilled, were then for the first time becoming conscious of the cult that preceded theirs
(293) and face to face with those who held them to be the heretics. Gnosticism was no birth or new thing in the second century, it was no perverter or corrupter of Christian doctrines divinely revealed, but the voice of an older cult growing more audible in its protest against a superstition as degrading and debasing now as when it was denounced by men like Tacitus, Pliny, Julian, Marcus Aurelius, and Porphyry. For what could be more shocking to any sense really religious than the belief that the very God himself had descended on earth as an embryo in a virgin's womb, to run the risk of abortion and universal miscarriage during nine months in utero, and then dying on a cross to save his own created world or a portion of its people from eternal perdition? The opponents of the latest superstition were too intelligent to accept a dying deity....

"Never were men more perplexed and bewildered than the A-Gnostic Christians of the third and fourth centuries—who had started from a new beginning altogether, which they had been taught to consider solely historic—when they turned to look back for the first time to find that an apparition of their faith was following them one way and confronting them in another; a shadow that threatened to steal away their substance, mocking them with its aërial unreality; the ghost of the body of truth which they had embraced as a solid and eternal reality claiming to be the rightful owner of their possessions; a phantom Christ without flesh or bone; a crucifixion that only occurred in cloudland; a parody of the
(294) drama of salvation performed in the air, with never a cross to cling to, not a nail-wound to thrust the fingers into and hold on by, not one drop of blood to wash away their sins. It was horrible. It was devilish. It was the devil, they said, and thus they sought to account for Gnosticism and fight down their fears. 'You poor ignorant idiotai!' said the Gnostics, 'you have mistaken the mysteries of old for modern history, and accepted literally all that was only meant mystically.'—'You spawn of Satan!' responded the Christians, 'you are making the mystery by converting our accomplished facts into your miserable fables; you are dissipating and dispersing into thin air our only bit of solid foothold in the world, stained with the red drops of Calvary. You are giving a Satanic interpretation to the word of revelation and falsifying the oracles of God. You are converting the solid facts of our history into your new-fangled allegories.'—'Nay,' replied the Gnostics, 'it is you who have taken the allegories of mythology for historic facts.' And they were right. It was in consequence of their taking the allegorical tradition of the fall for reality that the Christian Fathers considered woman to be accursed, and

called her a serpent, a scorpion, the devil in feminine form."

The Gnostics are said by Gibbon to have been "the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy of the Christian name." They were finally forbidden by Theodosias I. to assemble at their places of meeting or to teach their doctrines. Their books, too, were burned, so that we have now no full account of them. Only
(295) those who lied about them have been permitted a hearing.

The very fact that all the apparently historic events in the life of Jesus have an astrological and metaphoric character lifts him out of the category of physical humanity into that of the ideal. We may relegate him thither, and yet leave no vacant place in the arena of common life. This would be in perfect keeping with ancient usage. Among the reputed founders of philosophic systems we have no evidence of the existence of such great teachers as Manu, Kapila, Vyasa, Kanada, or Gotama, and the founding of the principal commonwealths was ascribed to demigods and fictitious eponymous heroes. Rome, Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and indeed every ancient city of note, was said to be established after that manner. Even leaders and teachers actually existing have been disguised by myth or the characteristics of the doctrine which they taught. Confucius and Zoroaster are hidden from view by the character assigned to them by later writers. Even Socrates as he appears and speaks in the Platonic *Dialogues* is little else than a personification of the Academic philosophy. When we consider that he is closely assimilated to the sages and hero-gods of the other worships, and that every significant point in his history conforms to astrological periods and to similar characteristics in the pagan religions, we cannot well avoid the conclusion that he too is an *ideal*.

Mr. William Oxley of England, in his great work on Egypt, takes the ground
(296) that the account we have of Jesus in the Gospels is substantially drawn from Egyptian sources.

Amenoph III. was one of the greatest of the old Egyptian kings. Amongst other gigantic works, he built the temple at Luxor, much of which is buried in sand and covered over by native houses. It is on the walls of this temple that very remarkable sculptures are portrayed relating to the birth, etc. of Amenoph III.; they are on the inner wall of the sacred shrine, the holy of holies, and the sculptured scenes represent the annunciation, the conception, the incarnation, birth, and adoration of the divine man-child (Amenoph III.) born from Mut-em-Sa. The two latter syllables mean "the Alone," or Only One, and the whole title means "the mother who gave birth to the Only One."

One fact is established beyond all cavil, and that is that the New Testament is the product of an order of men well versed in astronomy, and who by the aid of that science produced, on lines laid down by the ancient Egyptian hierophants, a new version of the old myths and allegories. We have as a fact the actual names and dates plagiarized from an Egypto-Arabic source, which undoubtedly betrays

its origin, and the interpretation of this, and numberless instances besides, in strict accordance with the astrological formula and system, with its Graeco-Egyptian zodiacal pictorial representations.

Oxley says: "*Apropos* to this doctrine, I have in my possession two statuettes—one dating from the twenty-second dynasty, 900 B. c.—of Isis, crowned
(297) and nursing the babe Horus. On my return from Egypt through Italy, I obtained a statuette of Mary, crowned and nursing the babe Jesus, which is an exact copy of the Virgin and Child in the church of St. Augustine in Rome. *The figures are identical.*"

Face to face with such a fact, who dare assert that the Egyptian Isis and Horus are a myth, and that the Christian Mary and Jesus are really historical? Some simple-minded ones beguile themselves with the delusion that these Egyptian and other heathen beliefs are prophecies of the real Jesus who in the fulness of time came down from heaven and was born of a virgin. But against this we have not only the actual claim of several Egyptian kings to be the "son of God according to promise or prophecy" (sixteen hundred years before Christ was born), but we have the fact of a whole nation *for thousands of years* resting their hopes of eternal salvation upon a belief that "the son of God, Osiris, came down from heaven, took upon himself the mortal form, was slain by wicked hands, rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where he became the great judge of all mankind."

What adds to the difficulty is that *no dates* are given in the writings of the early Christian authors, and, what is more, many of their names are evidently *noms de plume*; for instance, the arch-heretic *Arius* and the great Nicene Council seem to resolve themselves simply into a controversy relating to the sun-god under the form of *Aries* (the Ram or Lamb); and as to dates in connection therewith,
(298) they are simply Masonic points with an astronomical reference and symbolical meaning. In plain terms, nearly the whole of both the Old and New Testaments is an allegorical record of astral, solar, and planetary phenomena, with personages substituted for zodiacal signs; and with this key in hand the Hermetic student can unravel the allegories which are presented in such a form as to read like literal history.

Our English name for the zodiacal sign referred to is the Ram, but in Latin it is *Aries*, and *Nisan* (which is the month of March). The "sacred year" of all systems commences with this month and sign; hence the *Arian* heresy and the Council of *Nice*; which resolves itself into a descriptive personified account of a conjunction of planets about the definite fixing of the *first point of Aries* as a basic point in time in history, and which point is used in astronomical science to this day. But the appearance of the Cross, with the letters I H S on the planispherical chart, gives the key to the solution of the mystery. The Church interprets these letters

to stand for *Jesus Salvator Hominum*—i. e. Jesus the Saviour of Men. The initiates read them as *numerals*, which stand for 608; which is the exact period of a solar-lunar cycle—i. e. the number of years which pass before the sun and moon occupy the same relative positions in the heavens.

According to the astral theology of ancient religious systems, this cycle of 608 (or 600) years represented a Messianic period, at the completion of which a
(299) new messiah or avatar or savior was born upon the earth.

The one prior to Jesus was *Cyrus*, who gave orders for the building of the temple at Jerusalem just six hundred years before Christ. Manatheo speaks of a "Cyrus," son of Cambyses, first king of the twenty-second dynasty, but no Cyrus appears in the Egyptian annals. The biblical Cyrus is only another form of Osiris, and is in reality a sun-savior. The Arabs used the same system, for their Mohammed comes in just about six hundred years after Christ, and their era commences with their commencement of a new year, which dates from 622 A. D. Even our latest era—*Anno Domini*—did not come into general use until about one thousand years after the event it is said to commemorate had passed. This epoch was introduced into Italy in the sixth century by Dionysius the Little, a Roman abbot, and it began to be used in Gaul in the eighth, but was not generally followed until the ninth century. From extant charters in England it is known to have been used a little before the ninth century, but it did not come into common use for a century later. Time was, for centuries after the alleged birth of Christ, calculated from January 1 in the 4th of the 194th Olympiad, the 753d A. u. c. of the foundation of Rome, and 4714th of the Julian period.

The astro-theological foundation of the New Testament being demonstrated, the actual date of the compilation of the matter becomes of secondary importance, inasmuch as celestial phenomena are as true today as they were when
(300) first used to symbolize the intellectual and spiritual nature of man. As all nations that have any pretensions to be considered civilized have had the same phenomena for their religious systems, and as the path of the solar orb has been utilized for the history of its various personifications, the question arises, Which out of the many messiahs or sun-saviors are true, and which are false? As has been already noted, the leading incidents in the memoirs of Osiris, Buddha, Chrishna, and Jesus are identical in conception, but more or less varied in expression according to the idiosyncrasies of the writers. The logical and true method is to regard one and all as allegorical symbols, clothed not merely with an eclectic intellectuality, but vested with a moral power that can affect the heart and conscience of men for good.

The parentage of Christianism is in Egyptian Osirianism, while that of what we understand as Judaism is attributable to Chaldean sources, both converging to a common centre and finding a new expression through two diverse orders,

yet both equally versed in Cabalistic science, modified by the eclectic influences which were active at the period of their production.

The ecclesiastical party, for reasons which are well understood, never allowed the laity to be taught other than the literal and surface meaning, while the mystic brotherhoods were forbidden by the rules of their orders to make public the real meaning of the symbols, of which only the highest degree of initiates were allowed to know.

(301) Mr. William Oxley further thinks that if it were possible to raise the veil that obscures the historic past it would be found that the divine-human ideal figure of Jesus Christ is the combination of the Western *Hesus* and Eastern *Christus*. This accounts for the title, while the incidents in the life of the historic Apollonius of Tyana would supply material for the personal narrative. In fact, the nervous desire of ecclesiastical reviewers to suppress or explain away the too patent similarity between his and the Gospel life of Jesus is a half admission of there being a substratum of truth in the allegation.

Oxley says: "Against the claim for a very high antiquity in regard to even the Old Testament, we are confronted with the fact that all the Hebrew words used in its compilation have their roots in the Arabic language (or Aramaic, which closely borders upon the Arabic); and what is not less strange is, that many of the so-called apocryphal writings of the Christians are still extant in the same language. As Christian productions this fact is inexplicable, but considered as *Chrestonian* tales or legends, it is easy to understand, seeing that they relate to the humanized deity of that geographical district."

He concludes that Christianity, considered as a living spiritual truth, is the gradual development of a system of thought, and is the resultant of the highest and best conception of the human mind as an ideal of purity and every virtue that it is capable of expressing; and, further, that this ideal was presented to different
(302) nations long before the Christian one was known, and that it was the literalizing or personification of this *written ideal* that afforded conditions for the superstructure of ecclesiastical systems, dependent on a separate caste of men set apart for the purpose of its support and propaganda. As these men were able to grasp and wield power over the intellect, and even persons, of their votaries, so in exact ratio the spiritual and intellectual ideal (which is not a monad, but universal) was lost, and the assumed historical personage is exalted at the expense of spiritual liberty and the birthright prerogative of humanity. In short, the supposed Founder of Christianity is not an historical personage, but an old ideal presented in a newer and better and higher form than its predecessors; and, further, this ideal is not dependent upon a past historical, but is held up as the standard of attainment by humanity; and as each realizes the truth within him or herself, then they will find that the real "Christ" is not and was not an historical person, but a spiritual

life-giving principle within themselves.

The records of history show that a dramatic Christ has come down the stream of time from the earliest periods; from India through Egypt, China, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Arabia, Asia Minor, and Palestine, until the present time—from the Buddha of the Tauric constellations to the Aries and Pisces of the modern Christ; and all his manifestations possess the essential characteristics of the one sun-god. Midway between Buddhists and the Christians appears the sub-
(303) limely idealistic mythology of Greece, shining all over with the glory of the solar legend. Very prominent in this system is the god-man Prometheus. The name is synonymous with *Logos*, which is used in the fourth Gospel in reference to Jesus, and signifies a demi-deity; and Prometheus means *Providence*, and is represented by the all-seeing Eye. We select him rather than other notable impersonations, for the purpose of referring to the wonderful Greek drama written by Æschylus (*Prometheus Bound*), which was acted in the theatre of Athens at least five hundred years before the Christian era. The plot was derived from material even then of great antiquity, and contains all the essential features of the modern "Passion Play" so beautifully portrayed upon canvas in our churches and eloquently described by our ministers of the present day. No author ever displayed greater powers of poetry in supporting through this Promethean play the august character of this divine sufferer. We give a few lines from Potter's translation.:

%
"I will speak,
Not as upbraiding them, but my own gifts
Commending. 'Twas I who brought sweet hope
To inhabit in their hearts; I brought
The fire of heaven to animate their clay,
And through the clouds of barbarous ignorance
Diffused the beams of knowledge. In a word,
Prometheus taught each useful art to man."

He was called upon to explain how his goodness could have brought upon him
(304) such extreme suffering, and he says:

%
"See what, a god, I suffer from the gods!
For mercy to mankind I am not deemed
Worthy of mercy; but in this uncouth

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Appointment am fixed here,
A spectacle dishonorable to Jove!
On the throne of heaven scarce was he seated,
On the powers of heaven
He showered his various benefits, thereby
Confirming his sovereignty; but for unhappy mortals
Had no regard, but all the present race
Willed to extirpate and to form anew.
None save myself opposed his will. I dared,
And, boldly pleading, saved them from destruction—
Saved them from sinking to the realm of night;
For which oflënce I bow beneath these pains,
Dreadful to suffer, piteous to behold!"
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None remained to be witnesses of his dying agony but the chorus of ever-faithful women, who bewailed and lamented him. The earth trembled and the whole frame of nature was convulsed, and the curtain fell on the sublimest scene ever presented to human sight—a *dying god!* The preternatural darkness was exhibited on the stage, and the most agonizing and heartfelt sorrow manifested by the weeping audience. It was the "Passion Play."

Let it be kept in mind that all of the incidents of the Gospels have been acted in the theatres or illustrated in the sacred rites and religious ceremonies of pagan peoples from time immemorial. Are not the Gospels a plagiarized and adapted *drama?*

(305) We close this chapter with a further quotation from Mr. Johnson:

"I am not asserting that all this was pure fiction—that no one stood where men imagined they saw a God on earth. But I do recognize the extreme difficulty of satisfying a free and sincere mind as to how much or how little did 'happen,' and the extreme hardihood of asserting at this day that there was anything in the person or life of Jesus to vest in him the claim to be the enduring definitive centre of religious thought and association under any name or title whatsoever. Neither the character of the records nor the manner of their origination authorizes that postulate of perfection through which alone such claim could vest in any being. The veneration of ages for his name deserves respect as the satisfaction of a natural demand during a certain stage of human progress. But it does not prove him an exception to the law that the worship of personages must give way to the worship of principles—the centrality of an individual to the centrality of ideas—the divinity or 'lordship' of a man to the deity of the infinitely wise and good. It illustrates that law. Christism in due time passes, like polytheism, and a

larger faith succeeds. Thus the theory refutes itself.

"The Christian idealization demands that all imperfections in the New-Testament Jesus shall be ascribed to the misapprehensions of the disciples and the ignorance of the biographers. It is confident that Jesus must have been greater than the record shows. But we do not know that he was even so great as the record
(306) shows. We are confidently told that such an ideal as can be there discerned presupposes its actual—that no man could have drawn such a character except from life. 'Such a grand figure is not hewn out of air.' But it is quite possible to carry this kind of divination too far.

"If a man could be that, why could not a man or an age conceive that it ought to be? All that can fairly be assumed is, that there must have been an impressive life (or lives) behind all the construction; and this is not denied. But the necessities of the religious life in that time produced Jesus. Why could they not magnify their own product and improve upon it ideally as they developed into new and larger demands? If we are to insist that the idealizing faculty cannot go beyond actuality, no meaning will be left to the word ideal, and no such faculty will remain. This is the irony to which the old belief comes....

"A pure and simple worship of the Infinite and Eternal is the necessity of philosophy; it is the goal of science; it is the true ground of trust and prayer and love, of philosophic Theism and spiritual Pantheism alike; it is the parent of prophets, of mystics, of reformers, of all true builders of man's social unity and religious communion."

No reasonable man can doubt that the Christ of Paul and the Gospels is largely, if not altogether, ideal; and in the succeeding chapter we proceed to give
(307) more specifically our reasons for thinking so.

CHAPTER XII. JESUS AND OTHER CHRISTS

"Come now, let us reason together."—Isa. 1:18.

"Let me reason the case with thee."—Jer. 12: 1.

THAT there should be held so many different views concerning the character and work of Christ is itself a very suggestive circumstance. It implies that the evidence in the case is not direct and clear, and that there are grounds for doubt and uncertainty. That honest, well-meaning men should be left in doubt regarding the most wonderful event in history, involving their salvation, is still more astounding. One would suppose that if so wonderful an event as the incarnation of God had taken place it would have been made so manifest that the most skeptical could not doubt it. There seems to have been great neglect or indifference regarding the matter. Contemporaneous history takes no notice of Jesus, and the biographies that we have of him cannot be shown to have had an existence until nearly two centuries after he is said to have made his advent; and Paul, who had written concerning him before these Gospels were compiled, was so ambiguous that the most learned theologians differ as to whether he regarded the Christ
(308) as an actual person or merely an impersonation. The early records of the life of Christ, if any existed, seem to have been destroyed or lost, and there are no original documents nor authenticated copies of such records. There can be no true faith, no genuine intelligent belief, without evidence; and where is the evidence? To believe without some reason for believing is blind credulity. The most intelligent Christian writers do not even pretend to have any documents relating to the existence of Jesus that by any strain of language can be called evidence.

Neander, an eminent Christian writer, author of a *Life of Christ*, acknowledges in so many words his painful consciousness of the utter lack of historic evidence in regard to him, his acts, and wonderful performances. He demands, as an imperative necessity, to be permitted at the beginning to take the most important matters for granted. He asks: "What, then, is the special presupposition with which we must approach the life of Christ? It is, in a word, the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a sense that cannot be predicated of any human being, the truth that Christ is God-man being presupposed." Neander, by making this confession, surrenders the whole question. There is no direct evidence of the existence of such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, and all fair-minded, intelligent Christian writers admit it. What is called evidence is found only in the short sketches of the New Testament, which have been shown to be no evidence at all.

We might rest the case here. It is admitted that it cannot be *proved* that
(309) Jesus existed, and when we undertake to show to the contrary we undertake to prove a negative—a thing which is never required in a court of justice. Yet we do undertake it, and reverently invite the reader to impartially consider the points in our case.

There is in the biography of Jesus an utter want of *originality*. It is a copy of other lives. It is a significant fact that all the principal claims made for Jesus of Nazareth had been made for others long before him. We can only mention a few.

The birth of Buddha, like the birth of Jesus, was announced in the heavens by an asterism on the horizon which is singularly called the "Messianic star." When Chrishna was born his star was pointed out by Nared, a great astronomer.

The birth of every East Indian *avatar* was announced by celestial signs. Even the Jews have similar traditions regarding Moses and Abraham. Canon Farrar admits in his *Life of Christ* that the Greeks and Romans always held this idea of the birth and death of great men being presaged by mysterious stars, and Tacitus affirms this regarding the dethronement of Nero. All candid theologians admit that this doctrine of the announcement of the birth of extraordinary persons by the appearance of stars was a universal belief among ancient peoples.

Luke is the only evangelist who records the fact that the birth of Jesus was attended with the songs of angels from the heavenly world, and there is good
(310) reason for believing that this professed compiler drew his information from the apocryphal Gospel called "Protevangelion." But there is nothing novel in this idea, for the same thing had long before been recorded of Chrishna at his birth, that "the quarters of the horizon were irradiate with joy,"... that "the spirits and nymphs of heaven danced and sang, and at midnight the clouds emitted low pleasing sounds and poured down rain of flowers." It is only necessary here to state that similar demonstrations are alleged to have attended the advent of other Hindoo saviors, and also of Confucius, of Osiris, of Apollonius, of Apollo, of Hercules, and of Esculapius.

It is certainly very singular that all the circumstances connected with the birth of Jesus are recorded of several other persons long before. Chrishna was cradled among shepherds, to whom his birth was first announced, and the prophet Nared visited his father and mother and declared the child to be of divine descent. An aged hermit named Asita, like Simeon of our Gospels, visited the infant Buddha and predicted wonderful things of his life and mission, and wept because he was too old to see the day. Not only was the infant Chrishna adored by the shepherds and magi, but was presented with "gifts of sandal-wood and perfume," very like "frankincense and myrrh;" and he was also presented with gifts of "costly jewels and precious substances," very like "gold." Substantially the same things are recorded of Mithras, the Persian savior, of Socrates, and many of the Grecian
(311) and Roman demigods.

It must suffice it to say that these incidents are too numerous and circumstantial to be mere coincidences. King Kansa was jealous of the infant Chrishna, and ordered a general slaughter of the infants under a certain age and in a# certain district, just as Herod is falsely charged with having done when Jesus was born; and as Joseph and Mary were warned in a dream to flee into Egypt to save the young child's life, so the foster-father of Chrishna was warned of danger by a "heavenly voice," and he was taken to Mathura; and Canon Farrar, speaking of the

sojourn of Joseph, Mary, and the infant Jesus in Egypt, writes: "Ancient legends say that they remained two years absent from Palestine, and lived at Matarieh, a few miles northeast of Cairo." This seems to be the same legend, but the one regarding Chrishna is sculptured upon the rocks and temples of India, while contemporary history makes no mention of the slaughter of the innocents by Herod; and further embarrassment arises from the fact that Herod was not king at that time, as the taxing under Quirinus did not take place under the reign of Herod, he having been dead for several years.

It would be easy to present more than a score of instances in which persons who came to be regarded as demigods and heroes had been obliged to flee from the wrath of the reigning monarch at their birth, as is recorded of the infant Jesus. In all centuries of olden times the reigning monarch has generally been jealous of some mysterious child, whose parents or caretakers were obliged to hide him
(312) away in some safe resort.

The long fast and temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, found in the Gospel "according" to Matthew, have numerous parallels in the experience of other Messiahs, even in minor details. The fast generally, as in the case of Moses, the Ninevites, and Jesus, lasted forty days, but that of Buddha continued forty-seven days, and in his weakness and attenuation of body he was tempted by *Mara*, the prince of evil, who promised him all the kingdoms of the earth, "universal empire," on certain conditions; but, like Jesus, he said, "Avaunt! get thee away from me!" After the temptation and triumph both Buddha and Jesus were ministered unto by visiting angels! Zoroaster, the founder of the Persian religion, had a similar experience with the devil, of which there are fully detailed reports.

Both Chrishna and Jesus were precocious boys, disputing with doctors and astonishing their teachers with their learning, which had not been acquired in the usual way; and both wandered away from their parents and became objects of anxiety and search to anxious mothers. Both preached a celebrated sermon, wrought numerous and very similar miracles, were hated and opposed by the priests of their day, and both suffered premature violent deaths at about the same age, and then arose from the dead.

These parallels might be given to an indefinite extent, as they appear in *Asiatic Researches*, by Sir William Jones; Upham's *History and Doctrine of Buddhism*;
(313) Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*; numerous other ancient and modern writings on this subject; and the parallel facts presented by these authorities are admitted by the most distinguished Christian writers not a few.

In regard to miracles it is thought best to say only a passing word.

It is admitted by the ablest theologians of the orthodox schools that miracles are indispensable to establish the claim of a special supernatural revelation, and great reliance is made upon the miracles accredited to the Christian Christ; and

yet we find other saviors and heroes credited not only with the same miracles substantially, but with a larger number of even more wonderful miracles. It would be easy to fill a large volume with the alleged miracles of Buddha and Chrishna, and Prof. Max Müller affirms that the Buddhistic miracles "surpass in wonderfulness the miracles of all other religions." Zoroaster, Buddha, Osiris, Isis, and Horus all wrought miracles, even the raising of the dead; Serapis, Marduk, Bacchus, Esculapius, and Apollonius did the same; and the early Christian Fathers admitted the reality of heathen miracles, but very conveniently attributed them to the devil. In short, it may safely be affirmed that more wonderful and better-authenticated accounts of miracles are given of numerous other persons, both before and after the advent of the Christian Christ, than are given of his miracles in the Gospels.

The Greeks were accustomed to say, "Miracles for fools," and the Romans
(314) shrewdly said, "The common people like to be deceived—deceived let them be;" and even the Christian Father St. Chrysostom declared that "miracles are proper only to excite sluggish and vulgar minds; men of sense have no occasion for them." The modern theological idea of proving the record by the miracle, and the miracle by the record, has become too transparent for even the most credulous.

There is also great confusion about the time of the birth of Jesus, though the Church in a sort of perfunctory manner settled this by saying he was born December 25, A. D. One. But the Church adopted this date for reasons of an astronomical character. More than one hundred different dates, some extending back nearly a century, have been fixed as to his birth, showing that no one knew anything about it. A blundering notice of his birth assigns its date to the period when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, and makes the enrolment ordered by that official the occasion of Joseph's temporary sojourn at Bethlehem when that event took place. This enrolment, however, was not made till after the displacement of Archelaus from the kingdom of Judea and some ten years or more after the death of Herod, and the story is accordingly in direct contradiction with the account of the flight of Joseph into Egypt, while Herod was still alive, to preserve the life of his son from that monarch's jealousy. But what is very significant is the fact that when Cyrenius commanded the enrolment Judas of Galilee arose and denounced it. He established a distinct sect which continued till the overthrow of the Jewish
(315) people.

Josephus says: "When Cyrenius had now disposed of Archelaus's money, and when the taxings were come to a conclusion, which were made in the thirty-seventh year of Caesar's victory over Antony at Actium," Antiq. xviii. 2. The battle of Actium, in which Octavianus gained his final victory over Antony, occurred in b. c. 31. Counting thirty-seven years, would bring the date of the taxings down to A. d. 6. Archelaus after reigning ten years was deposed for misconduct, and banished into Gaul. Cyrenius, a Roman senator, had been sent by the govern-

ment to settle up his finances and take an account of the substance of the Jews, or, in other words, to assess their property in order to apportion their taxes. These things were done in the thirty-seventh year after the battle of Actium, or in 6 A. d. Counting ten years back, we would be at the year 4 b. c., or the year Archelaus began to reign. As Herod of course was dead before Archelaus ascended the throne, he consequently died before Christ was born, and hence the entire story of the slaying of the infants, the journey of the wise men, and the flight into Egypt falls helplessly to the ground.

"But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee." Matt. 2:22.

Here we have a strange state of affairs. Joseph and the young child turned
(316) from Judea to Galilee when Archelaus was as powerful in the one country as in the other, for his ethnarchy included both!

In reading the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel we find an inexplicable mystery. The very first verse reads: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Then in the sixteenth verse it is said, "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth verses the Holy Ghost is represented as the real Father of Jesus by a virgin; and his miraculous divine descent is elsewhere specifically taught in the Gospels, and the divine Sonship of Jesus has been accepted as a fact by the general Church—Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant.

On the other hand, there is proof positive, if the record is accepted, that Jesus claimed for himself simple humanity, and consequent inferiority and subjection to God; and Roman Catholics and orthodox Protestants very conveniently settle these contradictions by affirming that he was both God and man; while Unitarians reject the divinity of Jesus, and by way of apology for so doing magnify his manhood so as to make him quite divine, a human god.

It would be easy to fill volumes with accounts, with very slight variations, of the miraculous conception and birth of divine personages born of virgin mothers, who, after laboring and suffering for the good of men, came to a tragic death, which was generally followed by a triumphant resurrection and subsequent de-
(317) ification. The cases are so numerous that one hardly knows where to begin to enumerate them. It would be easy to furnish a roll containing the names of scores of incarnate deities, and it would be tedious to describe the many things in which they substantially agree.

According to some modern writers, supported by abundant sculptures in temples, caves, and rocks, Vishnu, the second person of the Hindoo trinity, has been incarnated eight or nine times, Buddha being the first, Chrishna the eighth,

and Gautama, also called Sakya-Muni, the ninth. The fact that these alleged incarnations took place at uniform intervals show their astronomical origin.

Equally suggestive is the fact that there are so many peculiarities connected with the birth of these gods, and also so many incidents in their lives and deaths absolutely identical.

The name of the mother of Buddha was *Maia* and the same name was given to the mother of the Greek Mercury and even to later divinities; which, like the name Mary, typifies the sea and sometimes the month of May.

Buddha had no earthly father, but was an immaculate conception of a ray of celestial light through a virgin mother. Chrishna, the eighth Indian incarnation, was born of the left intercostal rib of a virgin. His birth was concealed through fear of the tyrant Kansa. He raised the dead and wrought marvellous miracles, and washed the feet of the Brahmans. It would be tedious to give details, as al-
(318) most every incident recorded in the Gospels of the life of the alleged Christian incarnation is recorded in circumstantial detail of some ancient pagan deity.

The fact is, that all the great nations of antiquity, and many of the smaller tribes, have had very similar views as to divine manifestations in human flesh; and you need only turn to the pages of any good dictionary of mythology to verify the truth of this allegation.

We might extend these analogies to an indefinite extent. The author of *Bible Myths* has specified about fifty particulars in which Jesus is said to have resembled Buddha, and as many more particulars in the case of Chrishna. Nobody having any knowledge of the world's history will doubt that these Indian divinities preceded the Judean Christ by several centuries, as many distinguished writers, like Prof. Max Müller, have admitted.

We challenge the theologians to present one single prominent feature or characteristic said to have been shown in the career of Jesus which did not appear in several other alleged incarnations hundreds of years before. The fact is, that the Christ of modern times is a perfect copy of other Christs who preceded him. Not only are all ancient Oriental scriptures full of incarnated divine saviors, but the same symbols and ceremonies abound in their worship. Take the cross, for an example. In ancient India the cross was as common as in modern Rome, and heathen temples were built in the form of a cross centuries before papists and Puseyites
(319) and their liberal imitators ever thought of such a thing. It was a common symbol in the ancient worship of Egypt. It was a Druidic emblem in Britain five hundred years before the introduction of Christianity. Plato, the Grecian philosopher, four hundred or five hundred years before Christ proclaimed the cross to be the best symbol of the divinity next to the supreme. The worshippers of Serapis used it, and Hadrian, the Roman emperor, as late as A. d. 130 mistook them for Christians. The standard portrait of Jesus, so honored by modern Christians, is a copy of the

head of Serapis, the well-known sun-god, according to the testimony of Mr. King in his able work, *Gnostics and their Remains* (p. 68).

The same is true of baptism and the Eucharist, as ceremonies identical with these, in their main aspects, existed among the ancient pagans. The "Lord's Supper" virtually was in use more than two hundred and fifty years before Christ. Wherever Christian missionaries have gone they have found substantially the same dogmas and religious observances, and Tertullian, a Christian Father of the second century, conveniently explained this fact by saying that the devil had taught the heathen these same things to forestall the preaching of the missionaries.

And yet Justin Martyr in the second century (a. d. 140), in defending the Christian religion against the assaults of pagans, said: "For declaring that the Logos, the first-begotten Son of God, our Master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin
(320) without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead and to have arisen again into heaven, we say no more in this than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove." Here is a distinct admission in the second century, from one in high authority, that the doctrine of the death and resurrection of miraculously-incarnated deities born of virgin mothers was well known among pagans before the Christian era.

But we are not done with Justin Martyr yet. In his Apology to the emperor Hadrian he makes this most astonishing admission: "In saying that all things were made in this beautiful order by God, what do we seem to say more than Plato? When we teach a general conflagration, what do we teach more than the Stoics? By opposing the worship of the works of men's hands we concur with Menander the comedian.... For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vogue among you assign to Jove; there's Mercury, Jove's interpreter, in imitation of the Logos, in worship among you. There's Æsculapius, the physician, smitten by a thunderbolt, and after that ascending into heaven. There's Bacchus, torn to pieces; and Hercules, burnt to get rid of his pains. There's Pollux and Castor, the sons of Jove by Leda, and Perseus by Danæ; and, not to mention others, I would fain know why you always deify the departed emperors, and have a fellow at hand to make affidavit that he saw Cæsar mount to heaven from the funeral pile?

"As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be nothing more
(321) than man, yet the title of the Son of God is very justifiable, upon the account of his wisdom, considering that you have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word and Messenger of God.

"*As to the objection of our Jesus being crucified,* I say that suffering was common to all the forementioned sons of Jove, but only they suffered another kind of death. As to his being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that. As to his curing the lame and the paralytic and such as were cripples from birth, this

is little more than what you say of your Æsculapius."

St. Augustine says: "For the thing itself which is now called the Christian religion really was known to the ancients, nor was not wanting at any time from the beginning of the human race until the time when Christ came in the flesh, from whence the true religion which had previously existed began to be called Christian; and this in our day is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received this name."

A fellow and tutor in Trinity College and lecturer on ancient history in the University of Dublin (Mr. Mahaffy) closes one of his lectures in the following manner: "There is, indeed, hardly a great or fruitful idea in the Jewish or Christian system which has not its analogy in the (ancient) Egyptian faith. The development of the one God into a *trinity*; the incarnation of the mediating deity in a virgin, and without a father; his conflict and his momentary defeat by the powers
(322) of darkness; his partial victory (for the enemy is not destroyed); his resurrection and reign over an eternal kingdom with his justified saints; his distinction from, and yet identity with, the uncreate incomprehensible Father, whose form is unknown and who dwelleth not in temples made with hands,—*all these theological conceptions pervade the oldest religion of Egypt.* So, too, the contrast and even the apparent inconsistencies between our moral and theological beliefs—the vacillating attribution of sin and guilt partly to moral weakness, partly to the interference of evil spirits, and likewise of righteousness to moral worth, and again to help of good genii or angels; the immortality of the soul and its final judgment,—*all these things have met us in the Egyptian ritual and moral treatises.* So, too, the purely human side of morals and the catalogue of virtues and vices are by natural consequences as like as are the theological systems. *But I recoil from opening this great subject now; it is enough to have lifted the veil and shown the scene of many a future contest.*"

Indeed, the ablest of the Christian Fathers never claimed that Christianity was a new religion recently and specially revealed by Jesus, but made many admissions quite to the contrary. Clarke in his *Evidences* says that the most ancient writers of the Church did not scruple to acknowledge the Athenian Socrates a Christian.

Clemens Alexandrinus, of the second century (a. d. 194), wrote: "And those who lived according to the *Logos* were really Christians that is to say, those who
(323) practically accepted the Greek conception of a divine incarnation were really Christians." And why not, for is not John's Gospel an elaboration of the Neo-Platonism of the Greeks? and is not the whole Christian scheme an ingenious combination of Judaism and Oriental philosophy?

Lactantius well said: "If there had been one to have collected the truth that was scattered and diffused among the sects into one, and to have reduced it into a

system, there would indeed have been no difference between him and us." Could anything be more emphatic than this admission of a Christian Father of the fourth century that Christianity is made up of fragments of other religions?

A volume might be filled with similar admissions from the highest Christian authority, for it would be easy to show that it was the main argument of Justin Martyr (a. d. 141) that the Christian religion contained nothing that might not be found in all earlier religions, and that therefore its votaries deserved toleration and protection rather than persecution.

Compare the following, furnished by Mr. Johnson, with the teachings of Jesus:

"When you have shut your doors and darkened your room, beware of saying that you are alone, for you are not alone, for God is within, and your genius is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing?" (Epictet., i. 14); "Dare look up to God, and say, 'Use me as thou wilt. I am one with thee. I refuse nothing that seems good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt'" (ii. 16); "Be
(324) not angry with the erring, but pity them rather" (i. 18); "Be patient, mild, ready to forgive, severe to none, knowing that the soul is never willingly deprived of truth" (ii. 22); "No need to lift up the hands or get close to the ears of an image, so as to be heard. God is near thee, with thee, in thee. I tell thee, Lucilius, a holy spirit dwells within us, beholder of our conduct" (Seneca, Ep., xli.); "Between God and good men is friendship, yea, necessary intimacy" (De Prov., i. 5); "What use in concealment from men? Nothing is hid from God" (Ep., lxxxiii. 1); "God escapes the eyes; he is seen by thought only" (Nat. Quest., vii. 30); "No temples are to be built to him. He must be hallowed by each in his own breast" (Seneca, quoted by Lactantius, Ind., vi. 25); "Man's primal union is with God" (Cicero, De Leg., i. 7); "Virtue is the same in God and man; man therefore is in the likeness of God" (ibid.).

We could multiply these quotations indefinitely, but we forbear. The fact cannot be denied that Christianity is but the continuation and modification of the old pagan religions, and that Egypt has to be largely credited with supplying a great portion of the subject-matter of our so-called "special revelation." We could take up the sun-gods of Egypt and show that all the titles and offices ascribed to them are given to Jesus, and that often the very language is used. "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" is emphatically true, but in a broader and wider sense than
(325) is generally supposed. This will be more clearly shown hereafter.

CHAPTER XIII. A REVERENT CRITIQUE ON JESUS

WE say "reverent" out of pure regard to the feelings of multitudes of devout persons who verily believe that Jesus was and is God, and so any criticism of him is simply blasphemous. This subject is not to be treated in a light or frivolous manner.

We say "reverent" also out of respect to a smaller number of so-called *liberals* who deny the divinity of Christ, but who nevertheless believe that Jesus was the *one* pre-eminently good and wise man, and that no man equal to him ever existed or ever will exist upon the face of this earth; that he was the special Son of God, the model man, worthy of worship as the man who possessed so much of the divine spirit as to entitle him to the place of honor and grateful remembrance among men for all time and in all countries.

We think it more honest and respectful to reverently inquire into the evidences of his divine character, and not to accept with blind credulity what other men say. We are endowed with reason, and it seems to us proper that we should exercise our rational faculties, and not ignore them altogether. Honest *doubt* must be more acceptable to him, *if* he is God, than unreasoning faith.

(326) Now, we propose to look at him in the light of the New Testament, and especially of the Gospels, assuming them to be authentic. We shall here pass by his infancy and childhood (utterly ignoring the doubtful and controverted passages concerning his immaculate conception and miraculous birth), and take the first direct account we have of his life. This commences when he was about *twelve* years of age. We are told that he accompanied his mother and putative father to Jerusalem, whither they went to attend the feast of the Passover. Luke states that he strayed away from his parents, who were greatly concerned for his safety, but he was at length found in the temple among the doctors asking and answering wonderful questions, so as to astonish all who heard him with his wonderful knowledge. His mother gently reproved him for giving them so much anxiety, and he answered back, rather impatiently, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye

not that I must be about my Father's business?" But he went home with his parents and was subject to them, and for at least eighteen years dwelt with them and his brothers James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. The names of his several sisters are not given. During these eighteen years he is supposed to have learned the trade of a carpenter and worked with his reputed father, who was a carpenter, spending the most vigorous portion of his life in manual labor, only devoting about three years to his mission as the Messiah. Now, Jesus is held up as an "example," and we are "to follow his steps," and it does not appear that there was anything in his
(327) example specially worthy of imitation for about thirty years. We must find it in the last years of his earthly career if we find it at all.

The first instance in which the evangelists bring Jesus forward as a moral teacher is in the Sermon on the Mount. This discourse is supposed by Christians to be the masterpiece of wisdom and deep spiritual insight. While Matthew gives it as a complete discourse, Mark and Luke intersperse the substance of the sermon throughout their Gospels; which is strong presumptive proof that it was not delivered as a connected discourse. Like the book of Proverbs, it seems to be a collection of the moral sayings of former times, many of which can be pointed out, with slight verbal alterations, in the writings of pagan authors and of more modern Jews of the Hillel school. In fact, there is nothing in the sermon which had not been taught by many others a long time before, while there is much that is absurd and impracticable, not to say untrue and unjust. Even the deep spirituality involved in recognizing the spirit and intent of the law can be paralleled by several passages in Buddhistic scriptures. The so-called "Golden Rule" was announced by Confucius as an axiom nearly five centuries before the Christian era, both in its positive and its negative form, while the same maxim is laid down in most choice and beautiful language by Isocrates, Aristotle, Sextus, Pittacus, Thales, and many others from three to six centuries before Christ.

The same is true of the Lord's Prayer, though it is often asserted that Jesus
(328) first taught the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." This is not true. The "Lord's Prayer" is found in the ancient Jewish rituals, and is entitled a "Prayer to the Father," and the expression "Our Father who art in heaven" is common to many, if not all, nations and religions.

While there are several things in the Sermon on the Mount truly beautiful, there is nothing that is strictly *original*; there are many sayings which show a great lack of knowledge, and that are positively impracticable and immoral in their tendency. No Christian tries to keep these sayings. It would lead to vagabondism and would convert a nation into a crowd of tramps. It would be positively immoral to obey them. If Jesus did not *intend* that his teachings should be taken according to the common sense of the words used, why did he not say so? What is language for but to express one's meaning? So far from teaching the non-resistance of evil,

in other places he runs into the extreme of teaching revenge. (See Luke 10:10-12; Matt. 10:14, 15; Mark 6:11.) He also sanctions the most gross injustice. He commends the unjust steward (Luke 16:5-8), saying that he had "done wisely" in cheating his employer by compounding with his creditors, and advises his hearers to make "friends" of the "mammon of unrighteousness."

Moreover, whoever is familiar with the teachings ascribed to Jesus must know that his first condition of discipleship is *the total surrender of all worldly possessions and the non-accumulation of earthly treasures thereafter* (Matt. 16: 24;
(329) Luke 14: 26, 27; Matt. 19, etc.). Can words be more emphatic than the utterances of Jesus reported in Matt. 6:19-34?—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."... "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."... "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."... "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." This absolute unconcern about food and raiment is emphasized by repeating the injunction twice: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"... "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

The attempts of theologians to modify these precepts are most preposterous. They tell us that Jesus meant to discourage *anxious* thought about worldly possessions and wants—that he intended to condemn undue anxiety and worriment of mind; and they even assert that the original word implies and justifies this rendering. To this it may be replied, We cannot be certain as to what particular words Jesus used, as we have no manuscripts of the Gospels dating back to within four hundred years of his time, and the alleged copies that we have are not authenticated; so that an argument, even if justified by learned criticism, based upon the implied meaning of particular words is useless, unless we are sure, as we cannot be, that Jesus used those very words, and that he intended that his disci-
(330) ples and other unlearned and uncritical hearers should accept the implied rather than the obvious meaning.

But, taking the words in the Greek manuscripts of the Gospels now most approved by scholars, we deny that there is anything in them to justify the interpolation of the word "anxious" between the words "no" and "thought." There is the highest classical authority for the assertion that the verb employed here simply means to "care," "to be careful," "to heed," and is so translated in other portions of the New Testament, as, for examples, in 1 Cor. 7: 32, 33, 34; Phil. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:7; and in many other passages. When Paul exhorted the Philippians to be "careful for nothing," because the Lord was about to appear in judgment, he obviously meant that it was not worth while to make any provision for future bodily wants.

It is a universally-admitted principle of critical interpretation that the meaning of words in any given text must be determined from the context, the connection in which the word occurs. It so happens that Jesus has illustrated his doctrine in this connection so as to make it impossible to doubt as to the meaning of the words employed: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?"... "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and I say
(331) unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

The use of the illative word, "*wherefore*, if God so clothe the grass," and the word "*therefore* take no thought," show beyond doubt that Jesus intended to teach, and did teach, that his disciples were to be as indifferent to matters of food and clothing as are the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. Not only did he use words that sanction the utmost improvidence in regard to future bodily wants, but he gave the sense in which his words were to be received by referring them to the well-known unconcern of the birds and lilies.

But it may be further shown what Jesus meant to teach by reference to his own life and the lives of his first followers. There is little or no evidence in the Gospels or elsewhere that Jesus or his first disciples ever possessed any earthly goods whatever, or that they ever engaged in any of the useful or wealth-producing avocations of the country in which they lived. Matthew speaks of Jesus as the son of a carpenter, and Mark calls him "the carpenter, the son of Mary." The fervid imaginations of modern writers have depicted Jesus as an apprentice to his father and laboring at the carpenter's trade, but there is no evidence that he ever pushed a plane or drove a nail. There is no reason to believe that he ever erected a house for others, and it is certain that he never built a house for himself, for he has told us that "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." There is not in any of the Gospels one
(332) single word accredited to Jesus in favor of industrial pursuits, not one syllable to justify the accumulation of property, or any forethought whatever for sickness, for helpless infancy, or tottering age.

When Jesus sent out his disciples he expressly forbade them to make any provision for food or raiment. He said, "Provide neither gold or silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat." They were to throw themselves upon the charities of the world, accept such things as were given them, and to manifest the utmost indifference to worldly comforts. There is no evidence that any of the followers of Jesus who listened to his personal instructions ever engaged in any worldly avocation, except to catch a mess of fish when driven by hunger to do so. They lived from "hand to mouth," and if they had lived in our day

they would, every one of them, have been denominated "tramps," and would have been amenable to our modern laws of vagrancy. 'Tis true, there seems to have been some sort of care about future possible wants, but only on the communistic principle. They had a treasurer in the person of Judas Iscariot, but no *individual* possessions were allowed. We are told (Acts 4: 26) regarding early Christians, "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every
(333) man according as he had need." In Acts 2:44, 45 the facts are also fully set forth: "And all that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need." Whatever was allowed as a community, it is certain that no individual was allowed to accumulate or retain property on his own personal account.

In perfect consistency with the view here presented Jesus taught that the possession of riches was almost sure to debar one from heaven—that while it might be possible for a rich man to be saved, because all things are possible with God, nevertheless it is "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven." Riches were always denounced by Jesus, and poverty eulogized as if it were a virtue in itself, commending one to the favor of God and greatly increasing his prospects for the heavenly inheritance. If the triple testimony of the synoptical Gospels amounts to anything, it shows beyond a doubt that Jesus would accept no man as a disciple who continued in the possession of worldly property, or who accumulated earthly riches, or who allowed himself to think of the future necessaries of life, even food and clothing. At the same time, the most promiscuous and profuse almsgiving was enjoined: "Sell all that thou hast and give unto the poor," was the literal injunction. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

Besides this, he required absolute non-resistance: "But I say unto you that
(334) ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain "And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." This is even more than non-resistance; it is a reward for unprincipled men to impose upon you. It would be impossible to state the principle of absolute non-resistance in stronger language. But modern commentators tell us that Jesus did not intend to be so understood—that he merely intended to condemn the spirit of strife and retaliation. Why, then, did he not say so? Which shall we accept—what Jesus plainly and repeatedly said, or what commentators say he meant?

What are we to say about the doctrine of *bodily mutilation* taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 29, 30)? Theologians of to-day tell us that these words are to be taken in a metaphorical sense—that to secure salvation we must sacrifice

every passion that would lead us into sin, though it might be as dear as a right hand, foot, or eye. The reason assigned by Jesus for enforcing this precept cannot be reconciled with the assumption that it was intended to be figurative: "For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." If by members of the body Jesus *meant principles or passions* that might tempt and entrap one into evil, we must charge upon the precept the absurdity that it would be better to enter into heaven with one evil
(335) principle or passion than to be cast into hell with many evil principles and passions! The literal interpretation is favored by the fact that in ancient times bodily mutilation was recognized in religious matters. In Matt. 19:12, Jesus is reported to have said, "And there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." If this is not a sanction of bodily mutilation, what can it mean? That it was understood literally by many early Christians cannot be denied. The ascetics of the second century practised the most extreme literal mortification of the flesh, and even in the middle of the third century Origen, one of the most learned of the Christian Fathers, destroyed his own manhood by bodily mutilation as an act of piety. Much curious matter upon this subject may be found in Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, page 310, and also Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. xv. and notes.

The fairest and most reasonable way to ascertain what Jesus taught is to study his own life, and then to follow his example. It will be somewhat startling to many when we announce the proposition that the religion of the Christian Gospels is monastic and ascetic in the extreme, and that Jesus himself was an ascetic, and that he required his disciples to become such. One thing is certain: No man can study the character of Jesus and his teachings, his own life and the career of his immediate disciples, without admitting the monkish character of their religion. It was emphatically the religion of sorrow, the religion not only
(336) of anti-naturalism, but of unnaturalism. It virtually said: "Whatever is natural is wrong; whatever you desire is wrong. To do what is painful is right, while to do what you want to do is certain ruin. Life must be one incessant wail of suffering if it is to be followed with eternal blessedness. The body is the enemy of the soul, and the world the enemy of God. Worldly prosperity is a curse in disguise, while poverty and want and persecution and suffering of all kinds are indications of the divine favor." (See *Secret of the East*, by Dr. Felix L. Oswald.)

At the very commencement of his public career Jesus formed an alliance with that hardiest of anchorites known as John the Baptist, and in all the Gospels the close relationship between the missions of John and Jesus is constantly recognized. It is a tradition of the early Church that Jesus was never known to smile, and there is an implication in the Gospels that his face was prematurely old. He recommended a life of religious mendicancy and voluntary poverty as absolutely

necessary for admission to his kingdom.

But there was scarce anything in the teachings of Jesus that had not been insisted upon for hundreds of years before by the monks of India, Egypt, and other countries. It is impossible to go into details, but no man of reading will deny this allegation. Like the ancient monks, Jesus practised long fastings and abstained from flesh meats, though he ate fish and vegetables. He neither possessed nor sought to acquire any worldly property. While going about the streets
(337) and the seashore teaching by day, he generally resorted, like ancient monks, to the mountains and wilderness at night, and his principal religious devotions were performed in the darkness of midnight. He abstained from marriage, and had but little regard for the domestic relations. Asceticism was the distinguishing characteristic of the early Church, and the doctrine of the community of goods was practically received by the Church for two hundred years, and is so received by many to-day.

So far from practically condemning the literal teachings of Jesus as we find them in the Gospels, we take the ground that they were just what might have been expected from one holding the doctrine that the world was about to be destroyed and a new kingdom established upon the regenerated earth, of which he was to be the king and his disciples the princes. If there was anything definite in the teachings of Jesus, it was the speedy coming of the end of the world. Carefully study the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, the thirteenth of Mark, and the twenty-first of Luke if you have any doubts upon this subject.

The attempt of theologians to make it appear that Jesus only referred to the destruction of Jerusalem is most absurd. It virtually charges Jesus with the inconsistency of giving information upon one subject when his disciples desired information upon another. They asked him for signs that should precede the destruction of the world, and he distinctly affirmed, "This generation shall not pass
(338) away till all these things are fulfilled;" "There be some standing here that shall not taste death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28). The doctrine of the almost *immediate* end of all mundane things as they then existed is the only key to unlock what seems so absurd in the teachings of Jesus. If he believed what he taught as to the speedy end of the world, it was perfectly consistent for him to condemn the holding or accumulating of property, and to commend the most indiscriminate almsgiving, the most absolute non-resistance, with bodily mortification and mutilation, and a life of unworldliness and practical mendicancy and poverty. Jesus and his disciples taught and acted just as men would teach and act if they believed that the end of the world was at hand. His disciples so understood him.

In the year 960 A. d. there was in the Christian Church a revival of this doctrine, and the speedy end of the world and the second coming of Jesus were

proclaimed with great earnestness. The clergy as a class adopted it, and encouraged people to give away their possessions. A universal panic prevailed; all business was suspended; men abandoned their families, and multitudes undertook a pilgrimage to Palestine to meet their returning Lord.

It is hardly necessary to mention the craze of "Millerism" in 1843 in this country, when many, in perfect consistency with their belief, gave up their possessions and prepared their "ascension robes," and waited anxiously for the end.
(339) If the clergy of all denominations should now unite in proclaiming just what Jesus predicted concerning the end of the world, just in proportion as people sincerely believed the message they would at once literally accept the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, and act accordingly.

This leads us to the inevitable conclusion that much of what Jesus taught can only be understood and justified by his particular view and representation of the almost immediate end of all earthly things; and this understanding of the subject is much more creditable to Jesus as a teacher than the assumption that he failed to make himself understood, and that he did not mean what he said, though both he and his disciples practically in their lives exemplified the unworldliness and asceticism that he preached.

We submit as a key to the enigmas of the Sermon on the Mount and other hard sayings attributed to Jesus that he and his disciples believed and taught that this world was about to be made new, that the then present order was about to terminate, and that therefore earthly possessions and pursuits were of no consequence, and even the domestic relations were of little account.

That the teachings and examples of Jesus (in many respects) cannot be accepted by the people of the nineteenth century without a complete overthrow of existing institutions and forms of civilization is a self-evident fact. We must abandon all industrial pursuits, change all our views of the rights of property, adopt the communistic principle and policy, and lead lowly lives of self-denial
(340) and bodily mortification and discomfort.

We repeat that the teachings and example of Jesus were natural and rational from his conviction of the approaching end of all things.

It would be easy to point out many other things in the Sermon on the Mount equally defective and offensive to reason and common sense, but we forbear. We have dwelt upon this celebrated sermon at such length because it is held up as a model of moral teaching. We pronounce it a very inferior compilation of things good and bad, not at all corresponding with proper ideas of practical morality, and not adapted to the present necessities of civilization.

What is said of the Sermon on the Mount may be said of many portions of the alleged teachings of Jesus. We mention only a few instances. The parable of the Unjust Steward justifies a worldly cunning and a decidedly dishonest act

(Luke 16:5-8). Jesus commends him, saying that "he had done wisely" in cheating his principal, and advises his disciples to "make to them friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." A more grossly dishonest act could not have been committed by a person acting in a fiduciary capacity. To follow his example would overthrow all business integrity and lead to universal knavery.

In the parable of the Unjust Judge he gives a very low and anthropomorphic view of God and the efficacy of prayer. It is this: A certain woman went to a judge for a certain favor, and he would not grant her request. She persisted, and finally
(341) he said, "Though I fear not God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." Then the lesson taught: "And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry unto him day and night, though he bear long with them?" This certainly teaches that if one teases and worries God long enough, he will answer the prayer without regard to the rightfulness of the petition. Dr. Adam Clark says in his *Commentary* that the expression "she weary me" is a metaphor taken from boxers, "who bruise each other about the face, *blacken the eyes!*" We forbear to remark on this blasphemous doctrine.

We pass on without specifying the manifestly unjust principles laid down in the parables of the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Ten Talents, the Great Feast, and other parables, the manner in which he treated the woman of Canaan, the mystification and evasions he used, leaving her in doubt with regard to his real meaning, and the many instances in which he gave irrelevant answers and unfair and illogical conclusions. His teachings were notable for their obscurity and ambiguity; he tells us he did not desire to be understood; and no wonder that his most trusted disciples wrangled about his true meaning and came to opposite conclusions. His own family did not believe in him, and some persons thought him insane. Indeed, his mysterious and enigmatical style is so marked that it suggests whether, after all, what is said to have been spoken by Jesus was not the
(342) utterances and traditions of initiates in the second Christian century?

The claim of autocratic official authority to forgive and punish, to deny before God those who should deny him before men, to denounce whole cities for want of faith in him, to come in God's name to judge all mankind, to proclaim everlasting punishment and declare that some should never be forgiven, mars the beauty of Jesus' character. A real deficiency in his teaching was the absence of any explicit declaration of human brotherhood. It is a remarkable feet that no clear statement of this idea is recorded of Jesus. But the lack was supplied in a certain form by Paul, whose broader ethnic experience and more liberal culture made him recognize the demand more fully, and who was therefore bound to have it satisfied in his religious ideal. This was easy, since he had never seen Jesus, and could construct his personality as his own reverence and sense of human need

might prompt.

The clearest statement of human brotherhood in the New Testament is that ascribed to Paul: "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." Yet even in Paul's mind it seems to have been conditioned on faith in his Master. All were "members of one another, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free;" but it was only in so far as they were, or were fit to be, "in the body of Christ." Cicero and Seneca rest human brotherhood on broader and deeper foundations. "All are members of one great body," says Seneca also; but in what sense? "By the constitution of nature, which makes us kindred, and more miserable in doing than
(343) in receiving an injury; and by whose sway our hands are prepared for mutual help." Paul says, "In Christ is neither bond nor free." But Seneca says more broadly, "Virtue invites all, free-born, slaves, kings, exiles. It asks no questions about rank or wealth. It is content with the bare man." Again, exhorting Nero, he says: "Do not ask how much of manumission is endurable, but how much the nature of justice and good will allows you which bids you spare even captives and persons bought with a price. Let slaves find refuge before the statute; if all things are permitted you (by custom and power) against a slave, there is that which the common law of life forbids to be done to a man; for the slave is of the same nature as yourself." So Cicero says: "No other things are so alike as we are to each other;" "There is no one of any nation who cannot reach virtue by following the light of nature;" "The foundation of law is that nature has made us for the love of mankind."

Other testimonies to like effect might easily be adduced from "heathen" writers of that age. And the later Stoics do but echo the thought of their predecessors from the days of Zeno and Cleanthes when they reiterate in the broadest terms the belief that men are created for the very purpose of mutual good. And Philo says: "We all are brothers by the highest kind of kindredship, as children of reason;" "Slavery is impious, as destroying the ordinances of nature, which generated all equally and brought them up as if brethren, not in name only, but in
(344) reality and truth." But with the apostles of Christianity, as probably with Jesus himself, brotherhood was inseparable from belief in "the Christ."

But let us not overlook the facts that the Gospels attribute to Jesus certain beliefs which our present knowledge positively contradicts, and even sentiments and claims which the highest morality cannot approve. For example, take his belief in diabolic possession; his claim of power to forgive sins and to judge mankind with his disciples on twelve thrones; his denunciation of cities that should not receive his messengers; his official retaliation (Matt. 10: 33); the unpardonable sin; his giving Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and to his apostles the same powers; the second coming of the Son of man, with destruction of the world and the coming judgment day within that generation; condemning to endless punish-

ment those who have not succored believers; no salvation to those found unrepentant at his coming; the sinning brother who will not hear the Church to be treated as a heathen; his sweeping denunciation of Pharisees and Scribes; a personal devil and an everlasting hell; power over deadly serpents and the taking of poisons without injury; the working of miracles by faith, even to the removing of mountains and tearing up trees, raising the dead, etc. etc. etc.

But not only are the teachings of Jesus subject to criticism, but his acts are equally so. Take for an example the manner in which he addressed his mother when found disputing with the doctors in the temple, but more particularly hear
(345) his words to his mother at the wedding in Cana. She told him that the wine had run out, and he answered in the most uncouth manner, "*Woman*, what have I to do with *thee?*" That is to say, of what concern was his mother to him, and what had he to do with her trouble about the wine being out? Then the making of the wine, upon which the people got drunk, was by no means worthy of imitation. The quantity, according to some divines, was not less than two or three hogsheads of intoxicating drink, enough to last the balance of the week. The guests were already drunk, and, though the wine was made out of water, it was nevertheless highly intoxicating. We might also mention his rude answer when his mother desired to speak to him (Mark 3: 21-35). At the time of his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem he took an "ass and colt," the private property of some person, without permission, and the bystanders so understood it. He went immediately to the temple and beat out with a whip all the merchants (whom he calls thieves), all legitimate dealers in animals and doves for religious sacrifice, and violently overthrew the tables of the money-changers, whose business seems also to have been legitimate. This act was a "breach of the peace," and in any civilized country would have been followed by arrest and imprisonment. It was not right that he should assert his authority by such disorderly conduct, and that too upon the eve of the celebration of a religious ceremony. When waited on by a most respectable deputation of public men who served officially (Matt. 23: 21) and inquired of him
(346) "by what authority he did such things," instead of answering them frankly and making known to them his mission, he raised an irrelevant question, and because they could not tell whether "John's baptism was from earth or heaven," he refused to give any apology or explanation of his most treasonable and violent actions. He addressed the Scribes and Pharisees in the most extreme language, calling them "vipers," "blind guides," "hypocrites," "serpents," etc., and used fulminations that were calculated to excite the worst passions and the most atrocious acts. He told them that they were "whited sepulchres" and "fools." When he was accepting the hospitalities of a Pharisee (Luke 11:37-54) he abused and denounced both the host and his guests. He is said to have looked on the Pharisees "with anger," thus violating what he taught. His unjustifiable conduct toward the "barren fig tree" will

not be overlooked. It was not the season for figs; he had no right to expect to find fruit on that tree, yet he "cursed" it, and here again destroyed private property without rendering an equivalent. So with the swine of the Gadarenes. This story is childish and wicked, and his action resulted in the destruction of animals which must have been valued at about four thousand pounds sterling. He was also chargeable with dissimulation greatly at variance with moral rectitude. When his brothers would have him go to Jerusalem to attend the feast of tabernacles he declined, and advised them to go without him. But when they had gone, "then went
(347) up also to the feast, as it were in secret" (John 7: 2-10).

He certainly here practised deceit. When walking with the two disciples to Emmaus he pretended to be another person, and when they arrived there he "made as though he would go farther that is, he pretended what he did not intend..." (Luke 24:13). He practised the utmost dissimulation in several particulars in the affair of Judas, and carried it even farther than the traitor. (Read and study Matt. 26: 46-50 and context.)

We might pursue this subject indefinitely. It is enough for our present purpose to affirm that many of the errors in natural philosophy, physiology, astronomy, and other sciences that prevailed in that day are implied or incorporated in the Gospels, with many prevailing superstitions, and that there are more mistakes and a greater number of contradictions in the four Gospels than in any other writings of the same length now extant in any language.

There is no one subject upon which so many books have been written as what are called "harmonies of the Gospels." There are now more than one hundred such books extant, besides thousands that have gone out of print. Long ago as the seventeenth century Thomas Munn of London published such a book, on the title-page of which he states that he has reconciled three thousand contradictions. What does all this imply? Has it ever been found necessary to so reconcile the writings of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Newton, or Bacon? Could not God make himself understood? It is an acknowledged fact among juriste that the discrep-
(348) ancies in the four Gospels would destroy the credibility of any four witnesses in any intelligent court of law.

We must here express our conviction that the Gospels, which profess to give the life of Jesus, are not original, genuine productions, and it is time to show how they came into existence and were palmed off by ecclesiastics as the productions of those whose names they bear.

About the time of the birth of Christianity almost every system of philosophy and religion centred at Alexandria in Egypt. The Essenes, though scattered throughout all the provinces of the Roman empire, had their head-quarters at Alexandria, where existed a flourishing university. To this centre of learning seekers after truth from all countries of the globe found their way, and, compar-

ing their various systems, the result was the evolution of the Eclectic philosophy, made up of what was regarded as the best of every known faith.

Palestine and Egypt were geographically contiguous, and the commerce between them was general and constant through Alexandria. Here the various sects of Judaism came into direct contact with Greek and Oriental thought and philosophy, with which they had been made quite familiar during their captivity in Babylon. Pythagorean, Platonic, and even Zoroastrian and Buddhistic speculations were rife—were in the very air of Alexandria. It is notorious that in that city Christian theology assumed a systematic form. The first and best Christian
(349) manuscripts were Alexandrian, and so were the first bishops; so says Prof. Calvin E. Stowe.

It is impossible for any party to escape entirely from the influence of its surroundings. How could a new sect eighteen hundred years ago escape the influences that dominated the very atmosphere of Alexandria? Christianity, so called, did not escape this influence, but in a short time took an eclectic form made up of the then existing systems of faith and philosophy, so that we now find in it ingredients taken from every known system of religion and philosophy, including Judaism, Platonism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism.

Mosheim says this Eclectic philosophy, which "chose the good and rejected the evil out of every system that had been propounded to mankind," was taught in the university of Alexandria when Christianity came into existence. A very interesting question arises in this connection, which few have paused to ponder—viz. What became of the sects of the Essenes and Therapeutists after the commencement of the Christian era? That they suddenly disappeared as sects is an historical fact. But what became of them? Is there anything more natural than to assume that they became the pioneers of the Christian Church, and, in fact, that it was these people to whom the name "Christian" was first given at Antioch? The entire New-Testament Scriptures are full of phrases and allusions which clearly show the Essenean admixture, of which many examples might be quoted. Even Eusebius, styled the "Father of ecclesiastical history," without whose writings lit-
(350) tle or nothing is known of the early Christian Church, not only admits the close resemblance between this sect and Christianity, but he even claims that they were Christians.

A thorough investigation of this matter drives one to the conclusion that our Catholic Christianity came from Alexandria—virtually from the Essenean monks who flourished before the Augustan age, and that their writings are the foundation of our Gospels, re-edited, changed, and interpolated to suit times and occasions. Catholicism is the undoubted offshoot of Egyptian monkery, as Protestantism is an offshoot of Catholicism, and improperly called a *Reformation.* Paul probably became a sort of Martin Luther, and led the great schism from the Es-

senean Church, and it was then from a certain time called Christian. The four Greek Gospels of our New Testament were made up at Alexandria from Egyptian asceticism, and consist largely of a union of Neo-Platonism with Judaism, and is full of the occult and mystical so common in that period. They were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as can be *proved*, and he who is called Jesus of Nazareth was nothing more than an Essenean impersonation. This view is honestly held by the writer, and did space permit he could give many pertinent reasons for it. Investigation in this direction would meet a rich reward.

Many pious persons here confront us, and inquire reproachfully, "What is the use of destroying the faith of the people in the Christian religion?" This ques-
(361) tion implies what is not true, as it is farthest possible from the object of these papers to ridicule or in any way to bring religion into disrepute. It is not only good principle, but it is also good policy, to always tell the truth. Why should we say, either directly or by implication, that Christianity is a supernatural religion when we know it to be of human origin, and can show just how, and when, and where it grew out of then existing creeds and systems of philosophy?

Is religion such a sham that it can best be subserved by falsehood and imposture? We think not. And if we should adopt the Jesuistic maxims, that "the end justifies the means" and that "pious intent hallows deceit," it is simply impossible in this inquisitive scientific age to keep up a deception, however venerable for age and sacred from association. Knowledge is on the increase, and the people will not for ever wear bandages over their eyes, and, thus hoodwinked, swallow without question whatever is put into their mouths by the dispensers of theologic twaddle and priestly pap. Regarding Christianity as a special divine revelation recently made, it will not stand scientific and historic examination; but regarding it as of human origin, an evolution, a product of that age of pessimism which resulted from the disappointment of the Jews as to their national Messiah, and the disintegration and coming decadence and downfall of the Roman empire, coupled with the proclamation of the speedy destruction of the world itself, it is just what might have been expected—a religion of pessimism, of sorrow, of unworldliness,
(352) of evil forebodings.

"When the devil got sick, the devil a monk would be." When Charles IV. of Spain was discomfited by the misfortunes of war, he sought solace in embroidering a petticoat for the Virgin Mary. Rancé had a domestic tragedy, and he founded the order of Trappist monks. Loyola would never have founded Jesuitism if he had not first been disfigured and crippled in a military siege. Dante was an exile when he wrote his *Inferno*, and John Calvin was a dyspeptic and suffered from rheumatism, gout, and stone when he wrote his *Institutes*. The most distinguished devotees to the religion of self-reproach have always been sufferers from headache and neuralgia, as "crippled foxes decry the vintage," and grapes

are always sour that are beyond reach.

The germs of Christianity grew out of the decaying carcasses of the Jewish commonwealth and the Roman empire, and as the worship of sorrow and unnaturalness it is not promotive of the highest virtue and the best interests of human society. It is only when the distinctive asceticism is eliminated and its extreme pessimism is destroyed by a rational optimism that it becomes a real blessing to humanity.

Every religion reflects the characteristics of the place and time of its birth, and the gloomy and melancholic temperaments of the dwellers by the Jordan, the Nile, and the Euphrates thoroughly permeated and impregnated the sects of those countries.

Regarding Christianity as of human origin, we are at liberty to cast aside
(353) its lugubrious spirit, its impracticable unworldliness and unnaturalness, and with higher esteem, and a more genuine heartfelt appreciation, and a sincere acceptance and approval we are free to adopt and glorify its general humane spirit under the divine impulse of the universal Fatherhood of God.

The real religious basis is that he serves God best who serves man best, and the coming of the kingdom of God is concomitant with the coming of the kingdom of man.

The claim of infallibility is always suspicious, and there is no finality in religious truth and progress; and it cannot be doubted that the religion of the nineteenth century is as great an improvement upon the religion of the first as our civilization, science, commerce, and the mechanic arts are superior. Prof. Max Müller, of the orthodox University of Oxford, well says: "The elements and roots of religion were there as far back as we can trace the history of man, and the history of religion, like the history of language, shows us throughout a succession of new combinations of the same radical elements." In no system of religion is the principle of combination, of previously existing forms of creed and conduct, so apparent as in the Christian religion. It is the best because it is the latest of the great religions, and contains the best selections and combinations of all previously existing ones, Jewish and pagan.

Our faith in the sublime moral precepts of Christianity is increased and strengthened as we realize that they are thousands of years old, that they are the
(354) accumulated products of the ages—an evolution from the consummated wisdom of all previously existing religionists of all times and countries. God's real revelations to man are from within, and they would not be any more divine if they were from without. Of nothing can we be so sure as that God will take care of his own eternal truth, and cause it to shine forth with more radiant splendor as knowledge shall increase and true science shall learn to read more intelligently the records of the divine character and will in the infallible book of nature.

Ecclesiastical tomtits may twitter and flutter, and theological owls may look solemn and wise and hoot out their gloomy forebodings, but the true ark of Nature's covenant is safe.:

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"Ever the truth comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done."

The only safe position, because it is the only true one, is that there is a God in the universe, and that it is the divine order to make known his will by slow and uniform processes, and not by sudden and miraculous revelations.

The principle of evolution is just as true in its application to moral and spiritual things as it is in regard to the material world, and another Darwin will some day arise who will demonstrate the fact. Indeed, this field is "ripe for the harvest," as several new sciences, not dreamed of until within a half century past, are revealing facts and establishing principles which are sure to consign the old
(355) supernaturalism to regions of superstition and priestcraft.

CHAPTER XIV. A FEW FRAGMENTS

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—John 6:12.

GNOSTICISM.

SINCE preparing Chapter XI., on *The Ideal Christ*, and quoting freely from Mr. Gerald Massey regarding the Gnostics, some doubts have been suggested as to the soundness of his views. We have therefore carefully reviewed this matter, and can find no reason to abate one tittle from the conclusions presented by this painstaking and able writer.

The word *gnosis*, meaning *knowledge*, does not apply exclusively to a party or sect The Gnostics were not distinguished from Christians at first by sectarian

lines. The Epistles of Paul, both genuine and spurious, recognize the gnosis, and there were Gnostic sects, as well as individual Gnostics, both before and after the Christian era. The gnosis consisted in knowing, and mainly in not accepting as historical and literal what was really only allegorical. The chief Gnostic sects held as *secret* their essential doctrines, and at the same time they had an exoteric statement which they gave to the common people. Even Paul, who seems
(356) to have been a first-class Gnostic, preached one gospel publicly to the Gentiles, and another which he gave "privately to them that were of reputation" (Gal. 2: 2). His teachings were highly *Cabalistic*, and he seems to have delighted in "mysteries." He had no conference with any of the other apostles as to what he should teach, but went to Arabia, where he doubtless met the Essenean brotherhood, and probably learned from them instead of the Judean teachers. The Essenes were famous for the cultivation of sacred literature, and had their *personified* Christ, as we have reason to believe. Mr. C. Staniland Wake thinks, with good reason, that the Essenes were Mithrasts, and that they worshipped the sun, and Mithras, the Persian savior, was a personification of the sun. The Essenes, according to Josephus, treated the sun with great veneration, and offered certain prayers early in the morning, as if they made supplication for its rising. The Essenes and Mithrasts were Gnostics in that they held to a personified savior, and not a literal man of flesh and blood. The symbolism of the universe afforded models for the secrets of their religion, and their rites were introduced into every part of the Roman empire—of course including Palestine—and for nearly four centuries the Mithraic religion wellnigh overshadowed Christianity. Much that was written of Jesus indicates the characteristics of the secret initiations. It may appear strange to the superficially informed when we affirm, as heretofore, that many of those matters which Paul set forth with such seeming literalness were in fact mystic and
(357) arcane, the transcript of older doctrines, and were made up throughout of astrological symbolism.

The systems of many ancient peoples centuries before Christianity contain doctrines and dramatic stories closely analogous to the gospel story of Jesus. The Neo-Platonists held that these occult rites were merely a form of representing philosophic thought as if in scenes of daily life. While Paul refers to certain matters as apparently historical, he never overlooks their symbolic import. The interpolators of his writings misrepresented his real views, as is evinced by internal evidence in the writings themselves.

The fourth Gospel, falsely credited to John, was written for the evident purpose of opposing the Gnostic doctrine of Jesus not made flesh by presenting the Neo-Platonic dogma of "the Word made flesh." In many places throughout the New Testament there is an implication that there were those who denied that Jesus came in the flesh: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 1: 3). In 2 John, 7th verse, it is said: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." How does this comport with the assumption that the existence of the human Jesus was never doubted in the apostolic age? The ignorant and disingenuous ecclesiastics who wrote on Gnosticism in early ages always observed one rule, and that was to represent it as a mere offshoot and corruption of Christianity, invented because of disap-
(358) pointed ambition by apostates from the religion established by the apostles. The Rev. Mr. King, in his *Gnostics, and their Remains*, affirms that such representations "are entirely false." The truth is, that Gnosticism did not purport to be a Christian system, except by a kind of syncretism to reconcile different faiths. The Neo-Platonists attempted this, and Gnostics did the same on an analogous plan. The historical existence of Jesus was little else than a concession made to the unreasoning multitude, while the esoteric doctrine was so much older as to make such an existence of no possible account except as a piece of folk-lore to hang illustrations of doctrines upon. This is the central idea of every branch of Gnosticism. The forms set forth by different expositors are secondary and incidental, liable to mislead those who attempt to place them in the front and draw deductions from them; and hence Saturninus taught that all that was considered physical in Jesus was only a phantasy, and that what was from God was spiritual only, and not at all corporeal. As for the writings of Tatian, they are "lost"—that is, destroyed—and we are under no obligations to accept what his enemies have said of them. The period was one in which calumny, slander, and forgery were the rule, as well as the main dependence for refuting an adversary. We know nothing of Cerinthus except through Epiphanius, whose reputation for truth and veracity is so bad that he would make falsehood appear like truth by his manner
(359) of telling it. Our evidence respecting Cerinthus comes chiefly from Epiphanius, who once professed to be a Gnostic (Macosian), and afterward turned Catholic, and, Judas-like, betrayed some scores of his former associates, including seventy women, to the persecuting civil authorities.

The Ophites were certainly mystics, and read everything concerning Jesus as a sacred allegory. Many think that *Christos* was with them *Chrëstos*, the good, the incarnation and associate of Sophia, "the wisdom from on high." The "wisdom religion" was extensively symbolized. Pythagoras named his esoteric doctrine the *gnosis* or "knowledge," and Plato used a similar expression to indicate the "interior knowledge." Marcion was evidently Persian and used Mithraic symbolism. The ceremonials of Mithraism (red-cap Christians) and astral rites were adopted by the Catholic Church, besides many other rites of paganism. The Jewish *Cabala* and the Gnostics had much in common. The Sethites were of Jewish origin, and they held that Seth was the son of Sophia, who had filled him with the divine

gnosis, and that his descendants were a spiritual race.

The Mandaites were Gnostics, as their name indicates, and they found in the system the older type of doctrine which obtained in Mesopotamia and in the old and elaborate Babylonian religion. This is seen from the fact that the names of the old pantheon were adopted.

The variety of legends regarding Jesus show that he was not an historical character. Deriving the bulk of their theosophy from beyond the Euphrates, and
(360) even much from beyond the Indus, the early ecclesiastics changed names, but retained their original ideas. Nearly all Christian festivals are the equivalents of pagan observances, as is well known. Prof. F. W. Newman denounces the assertions of Tischendorf and Canon Westcott, concerning the Gnostics as "unworthy of scholars, and only calculated to mislead readers, who most generally are ignorant of the actual facts in in the case." "The uncritical and inaccurate character of the Fathers rendered them peculiarly liable to be misled by forgone conclusions."

Oriental Christianity and Parseeism furnish a striking example of religious syncretism. In the Gnostic basis itself it is not difficult to recognize the general features of the religion of ancient Babylon, and thus we are brought nearer to a solution of the problem as to the real origin of Gnosticism in general.

Dr. John Tulloch, principal of St. Andrew's University and the writer of the article on the Gnostics in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (ninth edition), truly says: "The sources of Gnosticism are to be found in diverse forms of religion and speculative culture antecedent to Christianity, especially in the theology of the Alexandrian Jews as represented in the writings of Philo, and again in the influences flowing from the old Persian or Zarathustrian religion and the Buddhistic faiths of the East." He also says it is "the fact that the spirit of Gnosticism and the language which it afterward developed were in the air of the apostolic age, and
(361) that the last thing to seek in the early Fathers is either accuracy of chronology or a clear sequence of thought."

In Appletons' New *American Cyclopedia*, under the title "Gnostics," it is said: "The Gnostics numbered two classes—the select few who were admitted to the divine secrets, and the large class of common believers who were not able to rise above the physical condition." The point is that the Gnostics had a *secret doctrine* which their adversaries did not know. The recognition of Jesus as an actual person was only apparent, and hence different people differed in that respect. The doctrine came from the far East, and teachers only sought to harmonize it with the new worship, as they also did with Mithraism. The real Gnostics were the spiritual men of the times, and mere externalists could not understand them. It would be amusing if it were not so serious to see men often affecting great learning, themselves not professing orthodoxy, yet vehement for what can only be called Roman ecclesiasticism. "The letter killeth," and "the wise shall understand."

Many writers on Gnosticism seem to know no more than the cock on the dunghill knows of the jewels that lie before him. The fact is, that the writings of the so-called Fathers, and of the New Testament itself, have come down to us percolated through Roman sacerdotalism, and must be taken with many grains of allowance. There were many men named Jesus at the commencement of the Christ-
(362) tian era, but that a Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead is not supported by a particle of evidence. The anonymous author of the great English book, *Supernatural Religion*, has shown how utterly valueless the Gospels are as sources of evidence; and where else shall we look for an historical Jesus? We can have no faith in historical "phantoms," "aions," and "illusions." Neither pagan nor Jewish contemporaneous history gives any countenance to the orthodox claim of a personal, crucified, and risen Jesus.

ORIGIN OF THE CHRIST STORY.

The Gospels were doubtless compiled nearly two hundred years after the beginning of the Christian era from the mythological and superstitious lore that was then circulating in great abundance; and Christ himself is only a mythological personage who, if such a person ever had any existence at all, existed many centuries before the Christian era, and was very different from the Christ of the Gospels, being originally Æsculapius or some other character of the like fame, and serving only as the basis of the Christian fable. It is certain that the primitive teachers of Christianity converted to their own purposes the writings of ancient poets and philosophers, mixing together the Oriental Gnosticism and Greek philosophy, and palming them on the world in a new form as things especially revealed to themselves.

It may further be remarked that at a most early period of the Christian era there appears to have been great doubts as to the real existence of Christ. The
(363) Manichees, as Augustine informs us, denied that he was a man, while others maintained that he was a man, but denied that he was a God (August. Serm. xxxvii. c. 12). There is, therefore, considerable force in the expressions of a modern writer that the being of no other individual mentioned in history ever labored under such a deficiency of evidence as to its reality, or ever was overset by a thousandth part of the weight of positive proof that it was a creation of imagination only, as that of Jesus Christ. His existence as a man has, from the earliest day on which it can be shown to have been asserted, been earnestly and strenuously denied; and that not by the enemies of the Christian faith, but by the most intelligent, most learned, and most sincere of the Christian name who have left to the world proofs of their intelligence and learning in their writings and of their sincerity in their sufferings. The existence of no individual of the human race that was real and positive was ever by a like conflict of jarring evidence rendered equivocal and uncertain. Nothing, however, is more common than for some persons to assume

an air of contempt, and to cry out that those who deny that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed are utterly unworthy of being answered. It is, truly, very convenient for them thus to shelter themselves by assuming his existence as incontrovertible, instead of fairly meeting historical facts which, to say the least, render his existence very problemetical. It is to no purpose to urge that it might as well be denied that no such a person as Alexander the Great or Napoleon Bona-
(364) parte ever existed as to set at defiance the evidence of the existence of Jesus. For the existence of neither Alexander nor Napoleon was miraculous, and there never was on earth one other real personage whose existence, as a real personage, was denied and disclaimed even as soon as ever it was asserted, as was the case with respect to the assumed personality of Christ. But the only common character that runs through the whole body of the evidence of heretics is, that they, one and all, from first to last, deny the existence of Jesus Christ as a man, and, professing their faith in him as a God and Saviour, yet uniformly and consistently hold the whole story of his life and actions to be allegorical. The very earliest Christian writings that have come down to us are of a controversial character and written in attempted refutation of heresies. These heresies must therefore have been of so much earlier date and prior prevalence; they could not have been considered of sufficient consequence to have called (as they seem to have done) for the entire devotion and enthusiastic zeal of the orthodox party to extirpate or keep them under, if they had not acquired deep root and become of serious notoriety—an inference which leads directly to the conclusion that they were of anterior origination to any date that has hitherto been ascribed to the Gospel history.

In accordance with the notion that Christ was a phantom, the writer of the Commentaries which are attributed to Clement of Alexandria, apparently quoting from the Gospel of Nicodemus, tells us that an apostle attempted to touch
(365) the body of Christ, but in so doing found no hardness of flesh and met with no resistance from it, although he thrust his hand into the inner part of it. A similar idea is conveyed by Luke where he says that Christ *vanished* out of the sight of his disciples, but yet shortly after stood in the midst of them—a notion consistent only with that of an apparition (Luke 24: 31, 36). Similar remarks may be made on the words of Christ to Thomas and Mary; to the latter he says, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father that is, I am not to be felt;" and to the former he says, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:17, 27). Both these expressions, contradictory as they are with regard to Jesus, still show that the writer knew something of the notion entertained that Christ was a *phantom*. Luke (24: 37, 39) also has words proving the same point, where he says that the disciples, when they saw Christ after his resurrection, thought they had seen a spirit and that he told them to handle him. Marcion of Pontus, who flourished about A. D. 127, believed Christ not to have been born of a virgin and to have grown

up gradually, but that he took the form of a man and *appeared* as a man without being born, and at once showed himself in Galilee in full maturity. Manes also, according to the testimony of Socrates and others, "denied that Christ was ever really born or had real human flesh, but asserted that he was a mere phantom." (See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 141.) For men who entertained this notion
(366) of "the person of Christ," his sufferings, death, and resurrection were of course a delusion—were only in appearance. Thus, according to Father Apelles, who wrote about A. D. 160, Christ was *not born*, nor was his body like ours, but consisted of aërial and ethereal particles. Very probably, Apelles did not think it unlikely that a body composed of such subtile matter as this should rise from the grave and be capable of passing not only through the smallest aperture, but even through solid matter. Barnabas, the companion of Paul, in his Gospel had another way of disposing of the question of the resurrection—namely, by denying that Christ was crucified at all, but was taken up into the third heaven by four angels; that it was Judas Iscariot who was crucified in his stead; and that Christ will not die till the very end of the world (Toland's *Nazarenus*, Letter i. chap. v. p. 17.) The *Basilidians*, about the commencement of the second century, disposed in a similar manner of the miracle of the resurrection by asserting that it was not Christ, but Simon of Cyrene, who was crucified instead of Jesus.

Such are some of the various opinions of the origin of the story of Christ's resurrection. They are placed before the reader that he may have a choice of theories. After matured reflection, however, he will, most probably, come to the conclusion that this tale originated in the same manner as "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary," "The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ," "The Gospel of Nicodemus," the epistolary correspondence of Christ and Abgarus, of the Virgin Mary and
(367) Ignatius, together with hundreds of other similar productions of the ages when facts were not so much appreciated as fables in the form of books. If he arrive at this conclusion, he will see no reason to believe that such a personage as the Christ of the Gospels was ever crucified, much less raised from the dead.

ANCIENT ENIGMAS.

It is amusing to observe how, in ancient times, the dark, enigmatical, and allegorical style was practised, particularly in the East, by all public teachers, both Jews and Gentiles. By this means they explained away the fabulous tales current regarding their gods, and discoursed on every branch of knowledge known to them. They deemed religion a mystery not to be publicly explained, and always delivered its dogmas clothed in dark allegories (*Oie. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii. iii.; Spencer de Legibus Heb., p. 182; Clerici Hist. Eccles.*, p. 23). The Egyptians and Chaldeans were noted for their dark sayings (*Simon Hist crû. des Comment*, p. 4). Gale (*Opuscula Mythologica*) gives an account of several ancient books expressly written as instructions to interpret allegories. The Greek poets, Homer not ex-

cepted, are by their scholiasts regarded as treating of their gods in a mystical style. The Stoic philosophers dressed the whole heathen theology in allegorical language (*Cic. de Nat. Deor.*, lib. ii.). The Pythagorean philosophy was taught in enigmatical expressions, the meaning of which was studiously concealed from the vulgar mind, and revealed even to the initiated only gradually as their years of
(368) maturity were thought to qualify them for its reception. Plato and his followers in the groves of Academia practised the same mode of teaching religion, especially theogony. The writings attributed to Paul the apostle, as has been shown, are replete with mystical and enigmatical expressions. This he confesses, saying that he spoke "the wisdom of God in a mystery," "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2: 7, 13). Accordingly, he regards the history of Isaac and Ishmael as an allegory (Gal. 4: 22-25), which he condescends to explain. The primitive Fathers of Christianity pursued the same mode of communicating instruction and of defending their religion against the pagans. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, all of them, were very expert in this occult system, in imitation of the heathen philosophers, by whom most of them had been educated. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*y lib. vi. c. 19), citing what he is pleased to call the assertions of Porphyry, writes that Origen, having been educated in Greek literature, intermingled it with the fictions of Christianity, that he dealt in the works of Plato, Numenius, Cranius, Apollophanes, Longinus Moderatus, Nico-machus, Chæremon, and Cornutus, and that he derived from these pagan authors the allegorical mode of interpretation usual in the mysteries of the Greeks, and applied it to the Jewish Scriptures. Thus, Origen's mode of teaching was identical with that of the pagans—a mode commended even by the learned Dodwell (*Letters of Advice*, etc., p. 208), who says that the pagan mystical arts of concealment are of use
(369) toward understanding the Scriptures. The Jewish rabbis also delivered their doctrines in the same obscure and mystical manner, as their Talmud, Cabala, Gemara, and other books, besides what we call the Hebrew Scriptures, amply show. The religious teachers of all the nations of antiquity thus delighting in dark sayings, it is therefore by no means wonderful that the writers of the Gospels, whoever they were, attribute similar enigmas to Jesus. This accounts, in a measure, for the obscurity of the Gospels, while, however, it traces their origin to a pagan source.

GODS OF VIRGIN BIRTH.

It is in perfect harmony with what has long ago been demonstrated by some of the most critical writers, not only in English, but also in other languages—namely, that the New Testament has been collected by Eclectic monks—particularly Egyptian monks of Jewish extraction connected with the Alexandrian college—from various legendary tales and other documents then afloat, which they modified to answer their own purposes, and which since their time have been considerably altered to suit the requirements of different religious

communities.

The Christian apologists of the second and third centuries evinced no lack of knowledge on this point. Justin Martyr, as already cited, in addressing a Roman emperor, says that the Christians, by declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, born of a virgin, said no more than the Romans said of those whom they styled the 24
(370) sons of Jupiter, such as Mercury, Bacchus, Hercules, Pollux, and Castor; and as to Jesus, he repeats, having been born of a virgin, the pagans had their Perseus, son of Jove and the virgin Danaë, to balance this feature. Creusa, daughter of Erectheus, was visited by the god Apollo, and in consequence became the mother of the god Janus. A Chinese virgin by means of the rays of the sun—regarded as a deity—became the mother of the god Fo, who acted as a mediator between his followers and another superior god. The Hindoo virgin Rohini in like miraculous manner gave birth to a god, one of the Brahman trinity. Another Hindoo virgin, Devaci, as already observed, having had an intercourse with the deity Yasudeva, became the mother of an incarnate god whose name was Chrishna; whose birth was announced by the appearance of a new star; whose life, when an infant, was sought in vain by the reigning tyrant of the country; whose principal exploits were killing a terrible serpent, holding a mountain on the tip of his finger, washing the feet of the Brahmans, saving multitudes by his miraculous power, raising many from the dead, dying to save the world from sin and darkness, rising from the dead, and then ascending to his heavenly seat in Vaicontha (Sir Wm. Jones's Asiatic Researches, vol. i. pp. 259-273). Somonocodom, who, according to the sacred books of the Talapoins of Siam, was destined to save the world, was another personage who had a virgin mother. The followers of Plato about two hundred
(371) years after his death, but more than a century before the Christian era, reported that he had been born of a virgin.

The most ancient Alexandrian chronicles, which furnish ample proofs of the universal prevalence of our gospel religion in Egypt for ages before the Christian era, testify as follows: "To this day Egypt has consecrated the pregnancy of a virgin and the nativity of her son, whom they annually present in a cradle to the adoration of the people; and when King Ptolemy, three hundred and fifty years before our Christian era, demanded of the priests the significancy of this religious ceremony, they told him it was a mystery." (See *Christian Mythology Unveiled*, p. 94.)

Indeed, the fabulous lore of ancient times is teeming with the amours of gods with virgins and the results thereof. Some writers have intimated that such births were the consequences of the artful intrigues of the pagan priests with holy virgins; but Dupuis, Albert, Alphonso, Boulanger, and others have clearly shown "that these and similar tales, which are revolting to common sense if taken literally, were originally, in Oriental learning, astronomical and other allegories,

conveying the most sublime truths then known touching the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and other physical and moral facts, while their meaning in after
(372) ages was gradually perverted to answer other ends."

THE EPISTLES SILENT CONCERNING THE WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS.

It is a most remarkable fact that in none of the Epistles is there any mention made of the various wonderful things narrated in the Gospels as having been said and done by Christ. Indeed, there is scarcely an allusion made in them to those astounding details with which every page of the Gospels is replete. No mention is made in them of what the Gospels state that Christ declared *regarding the day of judgment*—nothing about Christ's preternatural birth, his baptism, his temptation by Satan, his denunciations of the different existing sects, his precepts, his parables, his intimate acquaintance with publicans, with Magdalene, with Mary and other women. Not one of his miracles is detailed, and nothing is said of the marvellous circumstances which attended his crucifixion and death, such as the sun darkening, the earth quaking, the temple rending, rocks cleaving asunder, graves opening, the dead rising and walking the streets of Jerusalem. These are matters which, one would imagine, should occupy a very prominent position in all the Epistles—should be relied upon by the writers respectively as facts with which to attest and establish the truth of their doctrines, and which would, of themselves, suffice to convince and convert the most incredulous and obdurate mind. In the Epistles ascribed to Peter, James, and John, who are said to have been eye- and
(373) ear-witnesses of what Christ did and said, one would expect, certainly, to find frequent details of the marvellous things said of Jesus in the Gospels. But Peter does not so much as allude to the keys of heaven and hell which the Gospels say were given him to keep, nor even to the fact that Jesus, walking on the sea, enabled him also to do so and saved him from drowning. Neither does he tell those to whom he writes that Jesus conferred his blessing upon him when he pronounced him "the Christ, the Son of the living God;" nor that Jesus, after he had suspiciously asked him three times whether he loved him, and had as often received affirmative answers, charged him to feed his flock. Of course we cannot expect him to have recorded in his Epistles that Jesus graced him with the epithet "Satan," or that he denied the same Jesus thrice. If it was the son of Zebedee who wrote "the General Epistle of James" (about the authorship of which Christians have not as yet agreed), it would not seem too great a tribute to his divine Master for him to refer to some of his mighty words and deeds which he must have witnessed. Or if the author is the brother of Jesus (which is not very likely, since all his relatives except his mother shunned him), he could deplore the fact that he and his brothers—Joses, Simon, and Judas—*did not believe* in the pretensions of their divine brother, Jesus. But the very name of Jesus is mentioned, and that casually,

only thrice in the whole Epistle. John, "the beloved disciple," could in one of his Epistles, or at least in that which it is agreed he wrote—to the confirmation of the
(374) genuineness of Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels—have adverted to that curious incident of his mother asking Jesus to allow him and his brother James to sit on each side of him in his kingdom; or could, with a mixture of joy and sorrow, ruminate on the pleasure he had felt in accompanying Peter to prepare the last Passover which they had eaten with their divine Master, and bemoan the fatal disaster which shortly after overtook his Lord. But he writes not one word about these remarkable events, or about anything that occurred personally between him and Jesus. Indeed, the writers of the Epistles totally ignore the contents of the Gospels. How, then, is this fact to be accounted for? Did the writers of the Epistles—whoever they were—know anything at all about the contents of the present Gospels? Are we not entitled to infer that either the churches, etc. to which these Epistles were addressed were much older than the date of the Gospels, and even than the time at which the Christ of the Gospels was born, or that, if the present Gospels then existed, the authors of the Epistles knew nothing of them?

CONCLUSION.

We have seen that, so limited was the knowledge of Jesus of futurity, he falsely prophesied the end of the world, the time of his own resurrection, the perpetual praise of a woman who poured upon him a box of ointment, and the signs which believers in Christianity would manifest. We have also seen that a
(375) vast number of his precepts and doctrines were obscure, contradictory, bigoted, absurd, and untrue, and that much of his conduct was open to criticism. We have further seen that he was deficient in knowledge of natural philosophy; that he borrowed the best part of his doctrine from heathen mythology; that his life, his teaching, and his practices were identical with those of heathen monks who had preceded him; that, like many other human beings, he feared death; that neither his own neighbors, nor kinsmen, nor even his disciples, believed that he was, either in nature or power, superior to other mortals; and that he himself avowed that the purpose for which he had been ushered into the world was to send strife, division, fire, and sword on earth, and to make "brother deliver up brother to death, and the father the child, and incite children to rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death" (Matt. 10: 21).

Such has been the result of our inquiry. But let it not be supposed that there was nothing to admire in the alleged character and teachings of the ideal Jesus. There are many exceedingly tender things mingled with the arrogant and severe. His character, made up from many models, could not be otherwise than inconsistent and contradictory. It is a perfect mosaic, but such has been the reverence for Jesus, in view of the extraordinary claims made for him, that men have closed their eyes to his imperfections and faults, while they have greatly magnified his

virtues. We have known many persons in our day who as far excelled Jesus in
(376) every noble and manly quality as the civilization and morality of the nineteenth century are superior to those of the first. It has been well said that Jesus, whether a person or an impersonation, will continue to be the leader just so long as he *leads*; but he no longer leads. It is found (assuming his personality) that he taught nothing but what had been taught with equal distinctness before him, and that he taught much not suited to this commercial age and to the wants of this nineteenth century. While many persons profess to be disciples of Jesus, yet nobody even pretends to conform their lives to his alleged teachings. Properly speaking, there is not now a real Christian upon the face of the earth, as no one attempts to practise the extreme precepts Christ is said to have laid down in the so-called Sermon on the Mount. What is called Christianity is proved and admitted to be an evolution from various religions which were before it. The good in every religion is the same, and men will go on weeding out the impure and imperfect, the fittest only surviving. Christianity claims to be an infallible divine revelation, and that it is complete in itself, and of course admits of no progress. This is the difficulty between the old orthodoxy and the new orthodoxy of the creeds. The Church carries no flag of truce. It says, You *must* believe! True men answer, We *cannot* believe the impossible and the absurd. There can be no doubt as to who will survive in this struggle for existence. The "spirit of truth" is coming, and it
(377) will "teach in all things."

CHAPTER XV.
BLOOD-SALVATION

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission."—Heb. 9: 22. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—! John 1: 5.

IT would be tedious to quote even one-tenth of the passages from the New Testament in which salvation is ascribed to the blood of Jesus. Indeed, from Genesis to Revelation sacrificial blood seems to be the one prominent theme. The salvation

of Christ is emphatically the salvation by blood, and this idea runs through the whole system of what is called evangelical theology. Jeremy Taylor wrote about "lapping with the tongue the blood from the Saviour's open wounds," suggesting the well-known habit of the bloodthirsty dog. But Mr. Taylor was outdone by the late Rev. Bishop Jesse T. Peck, when he frantically exclaimed, in the presence of thousands of people at a religious mass-meeting, "We have not enough *blood* in our religion. I want to wade in the blood of Calvary up to my armpits, and *wallow* in it," suggesting the well-known habits of the filthy sow. But the Rev. T. D. Talmage, D. D., capped the climax when, in his usual rhapsodical style, he
(378) exclaimed in a recent sermon: "It seems to me as if all Heaven were trying to bid in your soul. The first bid it makes is the tears of Christ at the tomb of Lazarus; but that is not a high-enough price. The next bid Heaven makes is the sweat of Gethsemane; but it is too cheap a price. The next bid Heaven makes seems to be the whipped back of Pilate's Hall; but it is not a high-enough price. Can it be possible that Heaven cannot buy you in? Heaven tries once more. It says: 'I bid this time for that man's soul the torture of Christ's martyrdom, the blood on his temple, the blood on his cheek, the blood on his chin, the blood on his hand, the blood on his side, the blood on his knee, the blood on his foot—the blood in drops, the blood in rills, the blood in pools coagulated beneath the cross; the blood that wet the tips of the soldier's spear, the blood that plashed warm in the faces of his enemies.' Glory to God! that bid wins it! The highest price that was ever paid for anything was paid for your soul. Nothing could buy it but blood! The estranged property is bought back. Take it. You have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money.' O atoning blood, cleansing blood, life-giving blood, sanctifying blood, glorifying blood of Jesus! Why not burst into tears at the thought that for thee he shed it—for thee the hard-hearted, for thee the lost?"

Henry III. of England was presented with a small portion of the blood of Jesus, said to have been shed upon the cross, and to have been preserved in a phial,
(379) duly attested by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other distinguished functionaries as genuine. It was carried in triumph through the streets of London with rapturous shoutings by a large procession, from St. Paul's to Westminster Abbey, and the historian testifies that it made all England radiant with glory. Indeed, there has been enough of the so-called genuine blood that was shed on Calvary given to the faithful to float the largest ship in the navy of Great Britain. A sufficient quantity of the real cross upon which Jesus is said to have been crucified has been preserved to erect the largest temple the world ever contained. There is no end to the superstition on this subject, all going to show how deep-seated is the credulity which exists in the popular belief in regard to this matter.

There are many illustrations which might be given of "blood-evocation" among ancient pagans who regarded blood as the great arcanum of nature.

But what was the *origin* of the idea that blood is purifying, cleansing, purging? There is nothing in the thing itself that suggests this idea. Take a basinful of newly-drawn blood and set it upon the table before you. It soon coagulates, and emits an offensive odor, so that you are forced to hurry it from your presence. It is the very opposite of *cleansing*. If you get a drop upon your finger, you immediately wash it off. Indeed, some persons cannot stand the sight of blood, and shrink from its touch as from a deadly poison. There must be some reason for the idea that in some way blood is suggestive of cleansing or purifying. Now, we go
(380) to *nature* in search of knowledge. There is only one phenomenon in which the shedding of blood is a natural process, and that is when the young girl arrives at the stage of *pubescence*, and in this case, and in this case only, does it suggest the idea of *purification*. Before the period approaches nothing can be more suggestive of the untidy than the unpubescent girl. She is generally awkward, slouchy, and unattractive. But let the sanguineous evidence of approaching womanhood appear, and how changed! Her complexion becomes then most beautiful and bewitching. Her eyes sparkle with a fire which cannot be described. Her once ungraceful form becomes lithe, and her whole person changes in such a manner as to indicate that some great thing has happened. She has been purified or cleansed. She is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Each succeeding month she has a similar experience until the full bloom of womanhood has passed away.

Indeed, we find among the primitive customs of ancient Africans a special observance of the commencement of the catamenial period. Before the arrival of the time of periodicity the young girl is of very little account, and is not numbered as a member of the tribe. It is not considered indecent for her to run around in a state of nudity until she is fourteen years of age or until the evidence of pubescence appears. Stanley says of certain African girls: "They wait with impatience the day when they can be married and have a cloth to fold around their bodies." There was in use among certain ancient people, now worn by Catholic
(381) priests, an apron known as the *peplum*, which was worn after puberty.

The tribal mark and totemic name were conferred in the *baptism of blood*. A covenant was entered into which was written with menstruous blood, because blood was the announcer of the female period of pubescence. From time immemorial the Kaffirs have preserved the custom of celebrating the first appearance of the menstrual flow. All the young girls in the neighborhood meet together and make merry on the happy occasion. We are told by Irenæus how the feminine *Logos* was represented in the mysteries of Marcus, and the wine was supposed to be miraculously turned into blood, and Charis, who was superior to all things, was thought to infuse her own blood into the cup. The cup was handed to the women, who also consecrated it with an effusion of blood proceeding from themselves.

It would seem that the blood of Charis preceded the blood of Christ, and it is doubtful whether there would have been any cleansing by the blood of Christ if there had been no purification by the blood of Charis. Thus Nature's rubrics are written in *red*. The Eucharist is derived by Clement of Alexandria from the mixture of the water and the Word, and he identifies the Word with the blood of the grape. We give these delicate hints for what they are worth.

We have a deep conviction that the conception of the idea of purification by blood had at first some connection with the natural issue of blood at the com-
(382) mencement of periodicity in the female. In the Eleusinian Mysteries, celebrated by pagans centuries before the paschal supper of the Jews or the Lord's Supper of Christians, the element of blood was very conspicuously set forth, and Higgins has shown in his *Anaealypsis* that the sacrifice of bread and wine in religious ceremonies was common among many ancient peoples, the wine representing the blood.

In 1885 a very remarkable book appeared, entitled *The Blood Covenant*, by Rev. H. Clay Trumbull, D. D., and we have obtained the consent of this author (whom we have the honor to recognize as an old and very dear personal friend) "to use anything we please, in any way we please, without giving any credit." For this permission we are truly thankful, though we only avail ourself of a few of the facts bearing upon the point concerning which we write.

Our author says: "One of these primitive rites, which is deserving of more attention than it has yet received, as throwing light on many important phases of Bible-teaching, is the rite of blood-covenanting—a form of mutual covenanting by which two persons enter into the closest, the most enduring, and the most sacred of compacts as friends and brothers, or as more than brothers, through the intercommingling of their blood by means of its mutual tasting or of its transfusion. This rite is still observed in the unchanging East; and there are historic traces of it from time immemorial in every quarter of the globe, yet it has been strangely
(383) overlooked by biblical critics and biblical commentators generally in these later centuries.

"Although now comparatively rare, in view of its responsibilities and of its indissolubleness, this covenant is sometimes entered into by confidential partners in business or by fellow-travelers; again, by robbers on the road, who would themselves rest fearlessly on its obligations, and who could be rested on within its limits, however untrustworthy they or their fellows might be to any other compact. Yet, again, it is the chosen compact of loving friends—of those who are drawn to it only by mutual love and trust.

"There are, indeed, various evidences that the the of blood-covenanting is reckoned in the East even a closer tie than that of natural descent—that a 'friend' by this tie is nearer and is dearer, 'sticketh closer' than a 'brother' by birth. We

in the West are accustomed to say that ' blood is thicker than water,' but the Arabs have the idea that blood is thicker than a mother's milk. With them, any two children nourished at the same breast are called 'milk-brothers' or 'sucking brothers;' and the tie between such is very strong.

"Lucian, the bright Greek thinker, writing in the middle of the second century of our era, is explicit as to the nature and method of this covenant as then practised in the East: 'And this is the manner of it: Thereupon, cutting our fingers, all simultaneously, we let the blood drop into a vessel, and, having dipped
(384) the points of our swords into it, both of us holding them together, we drink it. There is nothing which can loose us from one another after that.'

"Yet, a little while earlier than Lucian, Tacitus gives record of this rite of blood-brotherhood as practised in the East. He makes an explanation: 'It is the custom of Oriental kings, as often as they come together to make covenant, to join right hands, to tie the thumbs together, and to tighten them with a knot. Then, when the blood is thus pressed to the finger-tips, they draw blood by a light stroke and lick it in turn. This they regard as a divine covenant, made sacred, as it were, by mutual blood or blended lives.'

"Sallust, the historian of Catiline's conspiracy against Rome, says: 'There were those who said at that time that Catiline at this conference, when he inducted them into the oath of partnership in crime, carried round in goblets human blood mixed with wine, and that, after all had tasted of it with an imprecatory oath, as is men's wont in solemn rites, he opened to them his plans.' Florus, a later Latin historian, describing this conspiracy, says: 'There was added the pledge of the league—human blood—which they drank as it was borne round to them in goblets.' And yet later Tertullian suggests that it was their own blood, mingled with wine, of which the fellow-conspirators drank together. 'Concerning the eating of blood and other such tragic dishes,' he says, 'you read that blood drawn from the arms and tasted by one another was the method of making covenant among certain nations.'

(385) "As far back even as the fifth century before Christ we find an explicit description of this Oriental rite of blood-covenanting. 'Now, the Scythians,' says Herodotus, 'make covenants in the following manner, with whomsoever they make them: Having poured out wine into a great earthen drinking-bowl, they mingle with it the blood of those making covenant, striking the body with a small knife or cutting it slightly with a sword. Thereafter they dip into the bowl sword, arrows, axe, and javelin. But while they are doing this they utter many invokings, and afterward not only those who make the covenant, but those of their followers who are of the highest rank, drink off the wine mingled with blood.'

"Again, Herodotus says of this custom in his day: 'Now, the Arabians reverence in a very high degree pledges between man and man. They make these

pledges in the following way: When they wish to make pledges to one another, a third man, standing in the midst of the two, cuts with a sharp stone the inside of the hands along the thumbs of the two making the pledges. After that, plucking some woollen from the garments of each of the two, he anoints with the blood seven stones as the "heap of witness" which are set in the midst. While he is doing this he invokes Dionysus and Urania. When this rite is completed, he that has made the pledges introduces the stranger to his friends, or the fellow-citizen to his fellows if the rite was performed with a fellow-citizen.

"Going back, now, to the world's most ancient records in the monuments of
(386) Egypt, we find evidence of the existence of the covenant of blood in those early days. So far was this symbolic thought carried that the ancient Egyptians spoke of the departed spirit as having entered into the nature, and, indeed, into the very being, of the gods by the rite of tasting blood from the divine arm.

"'The Book of the Dead,' as it is commonly called, is a group, or series, of ancient Egyptian writings representing the state and the needs and the progress of the soul after death. A copy of this funereal ritual, 'more or less complete according to the fortune of the deceased, was deposited in the case of eveiy mummy. 'As the Book of the Dead is the most ancient, so it is undoubtedly the most important of the sacred books of the Egyptians;' it is, in fact, 'according to Egyptian notions, essentially an inspired work;' hence its contents have an exceptional dogmatic value. In this book there are several obvious references to the rite of blood-covenanting. Some of these are in a chapter of the ritual which was found transcribed in a coffin of the eleventh dynasty, thus carrying it back to a period prior to the days of the patriarchs.

"'Give me your arm; I am made as ye,' says the departed soul, speaking to the gods. Then, in explanation of this statement, the pre-historic gloss of the ritual goes on to say: 'The blood is that which proceeds from the member of the Sun after he goes along cutting himself,' the covenant blood which unites the soul and the god is drawn from the flesh of Ra when he has cut himself in the
(387) rite of that covenant. By this covenant-cutting the deceased becomes one with the covenanting gods. Again, the departing soul, speaking as Osiris—or as the Osirian, which every mummy represents—says: 'I am the soul in his two halves.' This was at least two thousand years before the days of the Greek philosopher. How much earlier it was recognized does not appear.

"Moreover, a 'red talisman,' or red amulet, stained with 'the blood of Isis,' and containing a record of the covenant, was placed at the neck of the mummy as an assurance of safety to his soul. 'When this book [this amulet-record] has been made,' says the ritual, 'it causes Isis to protect him.' 'If this book is known,' says Horus, 'he [the deceased] is in the service of Osiris.... His name is like that of the gods.'"

Dr. Trumbull properly remarks:

"Thus in ancient Egypt, in ancient Canaan, in ancient Mexico, in modern Turkey, in modern Russia, in modern India, and in modern Otaheite, in Africa, in Asia, in America, in Europe, and in Oceanica, blood-giving was life-giving. Life-giving was love-showing. Love-showing was a heart-yearning after union in love and in life and in blood and in very being. That was the primitive thought in the primitive religions of all the world.

"An ancient Chaldean legend, as recorded by Bero-sus, ascribes a new creation of mankind to the mixture by the gods of the dust of the earth with the blood that flowed from the severed head of the god Belus. 'On this account it is that men
(388) are rational and partake of divine knowledge,' says Berosus. The blood of the god gives them the life and nature of a god. Yet, again, the early Phœnician and the early Greek theogonies, as recorded by Sanchoniathon and by Hesiod, ascribe the vivifying of mankind to the outpoured blood of the gods. It was from the blood of Ouranos, or of Saturn, dripping into the sea and mingling with its foam, that Venus was formed, to become the mother of her heroic posterity. 'The Orphies, which have borrowed so largely from the East,' says Lenormant, 'said that the immaterial part of man, his soul, his life, sprang from the blood of Dionysus Zagreus, whom... Titans had torn to pieces, partly devouring his members.'

"Homer explicitly recognizes this universal belief in the power of blood to convey life and to be a means of revivifying the dead.

"Indeed, it is claimed, with a show of reason, that the very word (*surquinu*) which was used for 'altar' in the Assyrian was primarily the word for 'table'—that, in fact, what was known as the 'altar' to the gods was originally the table of communion between the gods and their worshippers."

From the writings of Livingstone, the African explorer, as well as from the reports of Stanley, it appears that the custom of blood-covenanting is kept up in Africa in these modern times.

Describing the ceremony, Livingstone says: "It is accomplished thus: The hands of the parties are joined (in this case Pitsane and Sambanza were the parties
(389) engaged). Small incisions are made on the clasped hands, on the pits of the stomach of each, and on the right cheeks and foreheads. A small quantity of blood is taken from these points, in both parties, by means of a stalk of grass. The blood from one person is put into a pot of beer, and that of the second into another; each then drinks the other's blood, and they are supposed to become perpetual friends or relations. During the drinking of the beer some of the party continue beating the ground with short clubs and utter sentences by way of ratifying the treaty."

The primitive character of these customs is the more probable from the fact that Livingstone first found them existing in a region where, in his opinion, the dress and household utensils of the people are identical with those represented

on the monuments of ancient Egypt.

Concerning the origin of this rite in this region, Cameron says: "This custom of making brothers, I believe to be really of Semitic origin."

Henry M. Stanley, who was sent to rescue Livingstone, gives many interesting accounts of his experience with the blood-covenanters. In 1871, Stanley encountered the forces of Mirambo, the greatest of African warriors. They agreed to make "strong friendship" with each other. The ceremony is thus described:

"Manwa Sera, Stanley's 'chief captain,' was requested to seal our friendship by performing the ceremony of blood-brotherhood between Mirambo and myself. Having caused us to sit fronting each other on a straw carpet, he made an incision in each of our right legs, from which he extracted blood, and, interchanging (390) it, he exclaimed aloud, 'If either of you break this brotherhood now established between you, may the lion devour him, the serpent poison him, bitterness be in his food, his friends desert him, his gun burst in his hands and wound him, and everything that is bad do wrong to him until death.'" The same blood now flowed in the veins of both Stanley and Mirambo. They were friends and brothers in a sacred covenant—life for life. At the conclusion of the covenant they exchanged gifts, as the customary ratification or accompaniment of the compact. They even vied with each other in proofs of their unselfish fidelity in this new covenant of friendship.

Again and again, before and after this incident, Stanley entered into the covenant of blood-brotherhood with representative Africans more than fifty times, in some instances by the opening of his own veins; at other times by allowing one of his personal escort to bleed for him.

Thus we see that in ancient and modern times, among all people and in all portions of the earth, this idea of blood-friendship prevailed. In the primitive East, in the wild West, in the cold North, and in the torrid South this rite shows itself. "It will be observed," says Dr. Trumbull, "that we have already noted proofs of the independent existence of this rite of blood-brotherhood or blood-friendship among the three great primitive divisions of the race—the Semitic, the Hamitic, and the Japhetic; and this in Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the islands of (391) the sea; again, among the five modern and more popular divisions of the human family—Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Malay, and American. This fact in itself would seem to point to a common origin of its various manifestations in the early Oriental home of the now scattered peoples of the world.

"The Egyptian amulet of blood-friendship was red, as representing the blood of the gods. The Egyptian word for 'red' sometimes stood for 'blood.' The sacred directions in the Book of the Dead were written in red; hence follows our word 'rubric,' The Rabbis say that when persecution forbade the wearing of the phylacteries with safety, a red thread might be substituted for this token of the covenant

with the Lord. It was a red thread which Joshua gave to Rahab as a token of her covenant relations with the people of the Lord. The red thread in China to-day binds the double cup from which the bride and bridegroom drink their covenant draught of 'wedding wine,' as if in symbolism of the covenant of blood. And it is a red thread which in India to-day is used to bind a sacred amulet around the arm or the neck. Among the American Indians scarlet, or red, is the color which stands for sacrifices or for sacrificial blood in all their picture-painting; and the shrine, or *tunkan*, which continues to have its devotees, 'is painted red, as a sign of active or living worship.' The same is true of the shrines in India; the color red shows that worship is still living there; red continues to stand for blood."

(392) When a Jewish child is circumcised, it is commonly said of him that he is caused "to enter into the covenant of Abraham and his godfather or sponsor is called Baal-beerith, master of the covenant." Moreover, even down to modern times the rite of circumcision has included a recognition, however unconscious, of the primitive blood-friendship rite, by the custom of the a rabbi, God's representative, receiving into his mouth the prepuce or foreskin that is cut from the boy, and thereby made a partaker of the blood mingled with the wine according to the method described among the Orientals, in the rite of blood-friendship, from the earliest days of history. We make this statement on the testimony of Buxtorf, who is a recognized authority in matters of Jewish customs, though he gives it in Latin, with a view of limiting a knowledge of the facts.

All that we have stated concerning the blood-covenant brings us nearer and nearer to the disgusting and beastly habit of cannibalism. Dr. Trumbull says: "It would even seem to be indicated, by all the trend of historic facts, that cannibalism—gross, repulsive, inhuman cannibalism—had its basis in man's perversion of this outreaching of his nature (whether that outreach-ing were first directed by revelation or by divinely-given innate promptings) after inter-union and inter-communion with God, after life in God's life, and after growth through the partaking of God's food or of that food which represents God. The studies of many observers in widely-different fields have led both the rationalistic and the faith-

(393) filled student to conclude that in *their* sphere of observation it was a religious sentiment, and not a mere animal craving—either through a scarcity of food or from a spirit of malignity—that was at the bottom of cannibalistic practices there, even if that field were an exception to the world's fields generally. And now we have a glimpse of the nature and workings of that religious sentiment which prompted cannibalism wherever it has been practised. In misdirected pursuance of this thought men have given the blood of a consecrated human victim to bring themselves into union with God; and then they have eaten the flesh of that victim which had supplied the blood which made them one with God. This seems to be the basis of fact in the premises, whatever may be the understood philosophy

of the facts. Why men reasoned thus may indeed be in question. That they reasoned thus seems evident. Certain it is, that where cannibalism has been studied in modern times it has commonly been found to have had originally a religious basis; and the inference is a fair one that it must have been the same wherever cannibalism existed in earlier times. Even in some regions where cannibalism has long since been prohibited there are traditions and traces of its former existence as a purely religious rite. Thus, in India little images of flour paste or clay are now made for decapitation or other mutilation in the temples, in avowed imitation of human beings who were once offered and eaten there."

Réville, treating of the native religions of Mexico and Peru, comes to a sim-
(394) ilar conclusion with Dorman, and he argues that the state of things which was there was the same the world over, so for as it related to cannibalism. "Cannibalism," he says, "which is now restricted to a few of the savage tribes who have remained closest to the animal life, was once universal to our race. For no one would ever have conceived the idea of offering to the gods a kind of food which excited nothing but disgust and horror." In this suggestion Réville indicates his conviction that the primal idea of an altar was a table of blood-bought communion.

There is something that looks very much like cannibalism in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel. The Jews murmured that Jesus spoke of himself as the bread which came down from heaven, and inquired, "How can this man give us of his flesh to eat? Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers did eat, and died; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."

(395) This was spoken nearly two years before he is said to have instituted the memorial Supper, and has always been a mystery to commentators, though they allege that the whole mystery is explained in John 6: 63:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." This seems to be very farfetched indeed—an afterthought. It did not satisfy some of his disciples, for "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

From this simple idea of securing faithfulness by the transfusion of the blood of two persons seems to have come the idea of *propitiating* the gods by offering them bloody sacrifices. In primitive times, among barbarous and uncivilized peo-

ples, the conception was universal that the gods were very much like themselves, and that therefore they would be pleased with presents. When offended they could be conciliated, and when some crime had been committed they could be induced to forgive the transgressor by some valuable offering, such as the first-fruits of the soil or the most immaculate animals of the flock. This idea of obtaining favors from the invisible powers was carried to such extremes that for the honor of humanity we should feel inclined to doubt the monstrous stories were they not so well attested. The offering of these sacrifices became so degraded and disgusting by superstition that it ended in the belief that the deity's anger could be appeased, his revenge satisfied, his vanity flattered, and that he could be made generally
(396) pleased, by holocausts of human beings; so that the more costly the sacrifice, the more certain was the deity to smile upon the donor. The Moloch-worship, the mother placing the babe in the arms of the monstrous idol and seeing it burned before her own eyes, seems to exhaust the horrors of human ingenuity. We have only space to state that these abominations prevailed over most of the heathen world when the Old-Testament rites and ceremonies came into use among the Jews. We find the custom of offering sacrifices in the early pages of Genesis, when it led to the first murder. Cain's sacrifice, sacerdotal-ists tell us, was not accepted by Jehovah because there was no *blood* in it, as there was in the offering of Abel. Abraham was about to slay his own son when the blood of a ram was provided instead; and, in fact, all the Bible patriarchs sacrificed, and the exodus from Egypt itself was brought about under the pretence that the people had to go to the desert to offer their accustomed sacrifice.

The Jews borrowed their idea of sacrifice from the heathen, and sometimes were more heathenish than the heathens themselves. Thousands and thousands of innocent animals were cruelly butchered for sacrifice, as the Jews were full of Egyptian reminiscences on one hand and of Canaanitish modes of worship on the other. It is said that Jehovah allowed these abominations because of the ignorance of these people and their hardness of heart, lest they might despise a naked religion and be dazzled by the imposing ceremonies by which they were surrounded. The whole system of bloody sacrifices was based upon anthropomorphic conceptions of their Jehovah, to whom the "agreeable smell" of the blood was a sweet
(397) satisfaction. The Jews adopted the very worst features of paganism in regard to these bloody sacrifices, which they offered on all occasions—so much so that their prophets cried out against them and Jehovah himself denounced them.

The life or blood of the animal was distinctly said to make "the atonement for the soul." This notion of a *representative* victim is one that belonged to the whole ancient world, as can be seen by reference to any of the great cyclopaedias. It was *adopted* by the Jews, not *revealed* to them by Jehovah. The scape-goat (Lev. 16) and many other cases of seemingly expiatory sacrifices are embodiments of

this idea, which was adopted by Christianity directly from Judaism, whose priests had adopted it from other people.

The practice of bloody offerings was common to Hindoos, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Greeks, and Northmen. There is a Hindoo ritual for human as well as for brute animals set forth in *Asiatic Researches*. In *Fragments of Sanchoniathon*, Kronos sacrifices his "only son" to his father Ouranos, his "father in heaven." Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigeneia,

before going to Troy, and Polyxena, daughter of Priam, was immolated on the tomb of Achilles to his manes. Repeatedly in the Punic wars children of noble families were burned alive to Æsculapius, god of medicine. Burning at the stake and hanging upon a gibbet were sacrifices to appease the divine justice. In short,
(398) all bloody sacrifices were propitiatory, to appease the rage of hunger in a famished god. Blood was excellent, because its aroma was the vehicle of life, and so afforded support to life.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ulysses slays animals before the ghosts of Hades, and these run up to be nourished by the blood. He draws his sword, rushes upon them, and drives them away. Then, selecting one with whom he wishes to talk, he feeds him with the invigorating vapor, and the ghost is then made strong enough to talk.

But none of these sacrifices were strictly vicarious. The old gods were angry at neglect, but never had the kind of justice that a sheep or goat or cow could not appease. The Jews were not unfamiliar with human sacrifices (Lev. 27:28,29; Judg. 11:30-39), and even the early Christians are said to have offered bloody sacrifices of human beings. The deification of Jesus to correspond with the apotheosis of other personages required a divine parentage. This idea was not gotten up until the second Christian century. Justin made Jesus a second god. But the earlier Fathers did not connect the notion of the vicarious atonement with that of original sin and total depravity. Basilides maintained that penal suffering or suffering for purposes of justice of necessity implies personal criminality in the sufferer, and therefore cannot be endured by an innocent person as a substitute.

Prof. Robertson Smith, LL.D., in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in his learned article on "Sacrifice," says part: "Where we find a practice of sacrificing honorific
(399) gifts to the gods, we usually find also certain other sacrifices which resemble those already characterized, to be consumed in sacred ceremony, but differ from them, inasmuch as the sacrifice—usually a living victim—is not regarded as a tribute of honor to the god, but has a special or mystic significance. The most familiar case of this second species of sacrifice is that which the Romans distinguished from the *hostia honoraria* by the name of *hostia piacularis*. In the former case the deity accepts a gift; in the latter, he demands a life. The former kind of sacrifice is offered by the worshipper on the basis of an established relation of friendly dependence

on his divine lord; the latter is directed to appease the divine anger or to conciliate the favor of a deity on whom the worshipper has no right to count" (vol. xxi. p.. 132).

Piamlar Sacrifices.—"The idea of substitution is widespread among all early religions, and is found in honorific as well as piacular rites. In all such cases the idea is that the substitute shall imitate as closely as is possible or convenient the victim whose place it supplies; and so in piacular ceremonies the god may indeed accept one life for another, or certain select lives to atone for the guilt of a whole community; but these lives ought to be of the guilty kin, just as in blood-revenge the death of any kinsman of the manslayer satisfies justice. Hence such rites as the Semitic sacrifices of children by their fathers [Moloch], the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and similar cases among the Greeks, inasmuch as something is given up by the worshippers [pg 400]nor the offering up of boys to the goddess Mania at Rome....

"In advanced societies the tendency is to modify the horrors of the ritual, either by accepting an effusion of blood without actually slaying the victim—e. g. in the flagellation of the Spartan lads—or by a further extension of the doctrine of substitution: the Romans, for example, substituted puppets for the human sacrifices to Mania, and cast rush dolls into the Tiber, at the yearly atoning sacrifice on the Sublician Bridge. More usually, however, the life of an animal is accepted by the god in place of a human life.... Among the Egyptians the victim was marked with a seal bearing the image of a man bound and kneeling with a sword at his throat. And often we find a ceremonial laying of the sin to be expiated on the head of the victim (Herod, ii. 39; Lev. 4: 4, compared with 14: 21).

"In such piacular rites the god demands only the life of the victim, which is sometimes indicated by a special ritual with the blood (as among the Hebrews the blood of the sin-offering was applied to the horns of the altar or to the mercy-seat within the veil), and there is no sacrificial meal. Thus, among the Greeks the carcase of the victim was buried or cast into the sea [comp, with most important Hebrew sin-offerings and sacrifice of children to Moloch—outside the camp or city].

"When the flesh of the sacrifice is consumed by the priests, as with certain Roman piacula and Hebrew sin-offerings, the sacrificial flesh is seemingly a gift
(401) accepted by the deity and assigned by him to the priests, so that the distinction between a honorific and a piacular sacrifice is partly obliterated. But this is not hard to understand; for just as a blood-rite takes the place of blood-revenge in human justice, so an offence against the gods may in certain cases be redeemed by a fine (e. g. Herod, ii. 65) or a sacrificial gift. This seems to have been the origin of the Hebrew *trespass-offering* (p. 136).

"The most curious developments of piacular sacrifice take place in the worship of deities of the totem type. Here the natural substitute for the death of a

criminal of the tribe is an animal of the kind with which the worshippers and their god alike count kindred—an animal, that is, which must not be offered in a sacrificial feast, and which indeed it is impious to kill. Thus, Hecaté was invoked as a dog, and dogs were her piacular sacrifices. And in like manner in Egypt the piacular sacrifice of the cow-goddess Isis-Hathor was a bull, and the sacrifice was accompanied by lamentations as at the funeral of a kinsman."

Under the head of *Mystical or Sacramental Sacrifices*—i. e. sacrifices at initiations and in the *Mysteries*: "According to Julian, the mystical sacrifices of the cities of the Roman empire were… offered once or twice a year, and consisted of such victims as the dog of Hecaté, which might not ordinarily be eaten or used to furnish forth the tables of the gods…. The mystic sacrifices seem always to have
(402) had an atoning efficacy; their special feature is that the victim is not simply slain and burned or cast away, but that the worshippers partake of the body and blood of the sacred animal, and that so his life passes, as it were, into their lives and knits them to the deity in living communion.

"In the Old Testament the heathen mysteries seem to appear as ceremonies of initiation by which a man was introduced into a new worship…. But originally the initiation must have been introduction into a particular social community…. From this point of view the sacramental rites of mystical sacrifice are a form of blood-covenant…. In all the forms of blood-covenant, whether a sacrifice is offered or the veins of the parties opened and their own blood used, the idea is the same: the bond created is a bond of kindred, because one blood is now in the veins of all who have shared the ceremony."

A learned friend writes me: "I doubt whether a real distinction can be made between *propitiatory and expiatory* sacrifices. Propitiation is by expiation. The basic idea in all sacrifices of that nature appears to be *substitution*; that is, something taking the place of the offender…. It seems that the basis of all sacrifice is to be found in a relationship, or *kinship* (through blood), between the deity—who is only the representative of the tribal head regarded as still living in the spirit-world—and the worshipper.

"I may add that the idea of pollution by wrongdoing—i. e. offending the tribal deity—to be got rid of only by the shedding of blood, is not unknown to
(403) so-called savages. This applies especially to offences against chastity, as with the Mâlers of Rajmahal, India, and the Dyaks of Borneo. The pig is the animal usually sacrificed—probably because it is the most valuable animal food. The Pâdam Abors of Assam look upon all crimes as public pollutions which require to be washed away by a public sacrifice. Here we have the idea of cleansing by the application of blood, and this appears to be the idea also with the Mâlers, and probably among the aboriginal hill-tribes of India generally."

Mommsen, the Roman historian, says: "At the very core of the Latin religion there lay that profound moral impulse which leads men to bring earthly guilt and earthly punishment into relation with the world of the gods, and to view the former as a crime against the gods, and the latter as its expiation. The execution of the criminal condemned to death was as much an expiatory sacrifice offered to the divinity as was the killing of an enemy in just war; the thief who by night stole the fruits of the field paid the penalty to Ceres on the gallows, just as the enemy paid it to mother earth and the good spirits on the field of battle. The fearful idea of substitution also meets us here: when the gods of the community were angry, and nobody could be laid hold of as definitely guilty, they might be appeased by one who voluntarily gave himself up (*devovere se*)."

But it was left for Anselm of Canterbury, late in the eleventh century, to first formulate the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Before this there seemed to
(404) be among the theologians the idea that in some way Christ came to restore, at least in part, all that was lost in Adam. During the first four centuries of the Christian era there seems to have been no fixed opinion as to whether there was a ransom-price paid to God or the devil. Under the article "Devil " in the Encyclopœdia Britannica it is said:

"He [the devil] was, according to Cyprian (*De Unitate Ecd.*), the author of all heresies and delusions: he held man by reason of his sin in rightful possession, and man could only be rescued from his power by the ransom of Christ's blood. This extraordinary idea of a payment or satisfaction to the devil being made by Christ as the price of man's salvation is found both in Irenæus (Adv. Hcer., v. 1. 1.) and in Origen, and may be said to have held its sway in the Church for a thousand years. And yet Origen is credited with the opinion that, bad as the devil was, he was not altogether beyond hope of pardon."

It would be tedious to note the various views that have prevailed among theologians to the present day. Some hold that the offering was made to God to satisfy divine justice; others hold that it was a commercial transaction—so much blood for so many souls; and still others regard the whole as a governmental display to impress the world with a sense of the hatefulness of sin. Calvinists seem to think that the atonement was only made for the elect, but that the blood of Christ had sufficient merit to save the whole world. Roman Catholics hold that it is the
(405) literal, material blood of Christ that saves the sinner, and hence their extreme belief in the dogma of *transubstantiation*, the real body and blood of Jesus being offered in the sacrifice of the Mass, and taken by the penitent in the Holy Communion. Protestants generally hold to a sort of consubstantiation—a sort of real presence in the sacrament; while persons of intelligence profess to believe that this whole theory of blood-salvation is only to be accepted in a figurative sense. The fact is, that the whole scheme of vicarious atonement is an ancient super-

stition, though taught in the New Testament, and is absurd and unphilosophical, and false in principle and in practice, as we shall hereafter show.

We leave altogether out of view the logical conclusion that if the blood shed by Jesus was the blood of a man, it could have had no more efficacy than the blood of any other human being, and that if the blood shed was the blood of a God, the very mention of the thought is absurd and blasphemous in the extreme. It is nonsense to say that it was the union of the divine with the human nature that gave the blood of Christ its peculiar efficacy—that the altar sanctifies the gift for if the blood was changed by the man being united with the God, it was not human blood, but the blood of a divine man.

Now, there is no evidence that the blood of Jesus (supposing that he was crucified) differed in its essential qualities from other human blood. If analyzed by the chemist, it would have been found to contain only the constituent particles
(406) which belong to human blood. The white and red corpuscles and other chemical properties would have been found in it.

The dogma of blood-salvation as held by Romanists is cannibalism, pure and simple, and as held by Protestants it is sheer superstition, without one grain of reason to support it. It has no analogy in nature, nor in the philosophy of legal jurisprudence as held and practised by the most enlightened nations of the world.

It seems to us that the doctrine of vicarious atonement is not only immoral, but demoralizing. It represents God as punishing the innocent for the guilty to make it possible to forgive the guilty. This is inconsistent with the eternal principles of justice and rightfulness. It must have a demoralizing influence upon the mind and conscience of the sinner, to be told that his sins are already atoned for, and he only need to be cleansed by the blood of Christ; and this is to be obtained by simple faith and trust! Believe that Jesus shed his blood for you, and that he is waiting and anxious to apply it in washing away your guilt, and it is done! Then as often as you sin afterward you need only go through the same process to secure pardon! The easiness with which sins may be blotted out and washed away must have a demoralizing influence upon uneducated minds, though truly intelligent persons may not reason in this way. The low state of morals among those who really believe in this device for the forgiveness of sins may thus be accounted for. The numerous defalcations and downright thefts among the higher classes
(407) of Christians, and the petty lying and stealing among the great mass of Catholics and Protestants, are notorious, and can be traced, we think, to the easy methods of getting rid of the consequencees of wrong-doing. Our prison-statistics are truly suggestive, and should be carefully studied. Freethinkers are far in advance of Christians in the matter of practical morality. Many of those whom the courts exclude as witnesses, because they do not accept certain religious dogmas, are pre-eminently truthful, and would sooner die than tell a falsehood. They do not

rely upon the blood of Jesus to wash away the vilest sins and make them white as snow.

Our statesmen are beginning to find out that our system of *pardon* is most pernicious. To relieve from the consequences of wrong-doing through a divine contrivance of the vicarious sufferings of an innocent person, and that human disobedience is made all right as to consequences by this obedience of a divine-human person, does not commend itself to the intelligence of this nineteenth century. The answer of theologians to this charge is familiar and specious enough, but it is not practically accepted by the common people. When a child enters the Sunday-school room, and his eyes rest upon the conspicuous placard, "*Jesus Paid it All*" the natural inference is there is nothing more to pay, nothing to do but to accept the free gift.

Thousands of ignorant persons, Catholics and Protestants, no doubt secretly accept and rely upon this easy device to cover up their numerous shortcomings
(408) and misdoings. This doctrine is a welcome one in the murderer's cell and upon the platform of the gallows. In thousands of uncultivated minds the thought is no doubt deeply hidden that about the surest way to get to heaven is to commit a murder and have the "benefit of clergy," and in due time to be "jerked to Jesus" (as described by a Western journal) by the hangman's rope. Why should it not be so? The vicarious atonement has been made, and is being made in the Mass, and they have only to accept it. Two priests or ministers actually opposed the postponement of the execution of a certain murderer on the ground that he then believed in Jesus, but that if execution was postponed they did not know that he would continue to "believe," and that his soul might thus be lost!

Suppose that our State authorities should proclaim in advance free pardon and a princely palace to all lawbreakers on the simple condition of trusting in the mediatorial interposition and substitution of another, *already made and accepted*; what would be the effect on public morals? The system of redemption and pardon set forth in the New Testament is infinitely more than this, and must be demoralizing. All public officers know the evil effects of the pardon system, and how even the faintest hope of pardon encourages crime, and how certainly a free pardon is almost sure to be followed by a life of increased criminality.

There should be no such thing as pardon in our State jurisprudence—no "board of pardons" and no "exercise of the executive clemency." If a convict is be-
(409) lieved to have been wrongly imprisoned, or by after-discovered evidence is found to be innocent, let no "pardon board" or "executive" interfere, but let the case go back to the court that convicted him or to one of like jurisdiction, and let the case be judicially reviewed in the light of evidence; and if the accused is found innocent, let him be honorably acquitted, or if guilty remanded to prison.

There is nothing in reason, philosophy, or science that approves the theologie method of dealing with offenders. It violates every principle of justice, and has not one single quality of rightfulness in it. It is a fiction pure and simple, in form and in fact. Macaulay well said of this redemptive scheme, "It resembles nothing so much as a forged bond, with a forged release endorsed upon its back." Gregg pungently put it thus: "It looks very much like an impossible debt paid in inconceivable coin; or a legal fiction purely gratuitous got rid of by what looks like a legal chicanery purely fanciful. It gives unworthy conceptions of God as one delighting in the blood of human beings, and even suggests the disgusting practices of cannibalism. It is a relic of the ancient barbaric fetichism borrowed from savages by sacerdotalists for purposes of priestcraft, and should be scouted by all honest and intelligent men."

The severely orthodox Rev. Professor Shedd, as well as Dr. Priestley, admits that there was no scientific construction of the doctrine of the atonement in the writings of the apostolic Fathers (*Hist, of Doc.*, vol. ii., p. 208). The doc-
(410) trine was evidently manufactured when the Romish Church was evolved out of the innumerable sects of early Christendom, and was enforced by wholesale excommunication of dissenters and the death penalty. Christianity was planted in Germany, Prussia, and Sweden by military power. The Saxons were "converted" by Charlemagne. All the secret religions have a god or demi-god put to death. Even the Freemasons have Hiram Abiff. The death of Osiris was the central point in the Egyptian system. He was killed by Seth or Typhon, and returned to life as Rat-Amenti, the judge. In Egypt, Christianity moulded its doctrines of the Trinity, atonement, and "mother of God." The Osirian theology was grafted on the Christian stock, if indeed the Christian system was not an evolution of Osirianism; and of this the monstrous concoction known as *vicarious atonement* was made, and thrust down men's throats by threats of hell and the visits of the executioner.

We might extend our remarks upon this subject indefinitely, but we have not space. We have seen that *blood-salvation* did not originate with either Jews or Christians. Dr. Trumbull has proved this over and over again, and Kurtz, an orthodox writer, has admitted this fact. He says: "A comparison of the religious symbols of the Old Testament with those of ancient heathendom shows that the ground and the starting-point of those forms of religion which found their appropriate expressions in symbols was the same in all cases; while the history of civi-
(411) lization proves that on this point priority cannot be claimed by the Israelites. But when instituting such an inquiry we shall also find that the symbols which were transferred from the religions of nature to that of the spirit first passed through the fire of divine purification, from which they issued as the distinctive theology of the Jews, the dross of a pantheistic deification of nature having been consumed." All this is very frank, but we should not overlook the fact, so clearly established,

that this doctrine of cleansing blood, so constantly taught in the New Testament and proclaimed from every orthodox pulpit in the land, was not a *divine revelation* specially made to Jews or Christians, but has been adopted and modified from the religions of nature, celebrated in all parts of the world by the most barbarous peoples in the remotest periods of time. Indeed, the more gross and savage the people, the more disgusting has been this doctrine of *blood-salvation.*

Dr. Trumbull could only think of two possible ways of explaining these marvellous things: "How it came to pass that men everywhere were so generally agreed on the main symbols of their religious yearnings, and their religious hopes in this realm of their aspirations, is a question which obviously admits of two possible answers. A common revelation from God may have been given to primitive man, and all these varying yet related indications of religious strivings and aim may be but the perverted remains of the lessons of that misused or slighted revelation. On the other hand, God may originally have implanted the
(412) germs of a common religious thought in the mind of man, and then have adapted his successive revelations to the outworking of those germs. Whichever view of the probable origin of these common symbolisms, all the world over, be adopted by any Christian student, the importance of the symbolisms themselves, in their relation to the truths of revelation, is manifestly the same."... "Because the primitive rite of blood-covenanting was well known in the lands of the Bible at the time of the writing of the Bible, for that very reason we are not to look to the Bible for a specific explanation of the rite itself, even where there are incidental references in the Bible to the rite and its observances; but, on the other hand, we are to find an explanation of the biblical illustrations of the primitive rite in the understanding of that rite which we gain from outside sources."

These assumptions are very flimsy stuff upon which to found the most prominent and mysterious doctrine of the orthodox Christian religion, making it the Alpha and Omega of the whole "*scheme of redemption*" To witness the mummeries of Roman Catholic priests and the manipulations of Protestant ministers in the celebration of the "Eucharistic Feast" or "Holy Communion" is enough to lead a truly intelligent man to wonder why these celebrants do not laugh each other in the face. Even our Universalist and Unitarian ministers sometimes indulge in this heathen diversion, though some of them deeply feel the absurdity of the rite, and the consequent humiliation to which they are subjected. Nevertheless, some
(413) of our most profound statesmen, when about to die, call in a priest, Catholic or Protestant, to administer the heathen ordinance. When will the world open its blind eyes, and learn that all that God requires of men is to "walk humbly, love mercy, and deal justly"?

There is no difficulty in accepting the words of a God who is said to have uttered the burning reproof to ritualists and hypocrites as follows: "To what pur-

pose is the multitude of your sacrifices? I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn meeting. And when you spread your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, you make many prayers I will not hear, your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widows."

This doctrine of *bloodsalvation* is, in our judgment, most unphilosophical and even absurd. It originated, as we have shown, in the most gross and anthropomorphic conceptions of God, and its solemn celebration in orthodox churches is inseparable from the most ignorant and superstitious rites of the most savage
(414) peoples. Its tendency must be demoralizing.

CHAPTER XVI. THINGS THAT REMAIN

"That those things which cannot be shaken may remain."—Heb. 12: 27.

IN the preceding chapters we have shown that in our judgment the time has fully come for the fearless proclamation of the whole truth, regardless of temporary consequences.

We think that we have also shown that for many important reasons we cannot expect the whole truth from the professional clergy.

We have shown that the Jews are not the very ancient and numerous people that they have been supposed to have been, and that many of their claims are purely fabulous; and that this is specially true of their Pentateuch, which Moses, supposing such a man to have lived, could not have written.

We have shown how extensively symbolism anciently prevailed in sacred writings, how modern sacerdotalists have accepted as literal history and matters of fact what was at first a romance or an allegory intended to illustrate certain principles, and how the introduction of astral keys can only explain many of the

(415) Old-Testament stories, which, taken literally, are extremely absurd and foolish.

We think we have shown that the "fall" of the mythical Adam and Eve is an allegory, and not an historical fact, and that it is extremely unfortunate that the whole system of dogmatic theology is made to depend upon a mythus.

We have gone in search of the "second Adam," and have not found him, except in the New Testament, and we have shown how utterly incomplete and unsatisfactory that account is, not rising in any degree to the character of evidence.

We have shown that the Gospels are highly dramatic; that the Christ is largely ideal; that many other persons before the Christian era claimed all that was claimed for Jesus; and that he, his conduct, and alleged sayings (he wrote nothing) are widely open to criticism.

We have shown that the distinguishing feature of the New Testament—blood-salvation—is not a special revelation, but that it has been borrowed and modified and adapted from savages and from the most ignorant and superstitious tribes; and that what is called the "redemptive scheme" is full of absurdities and contradictions, and that it is philosophically and naturally demoralizing in its tendency and influence if its logical consequences are accepted.

We now come to the practical question, *What have we left?* Is there anything in religion worth preserving? Indeed, is there anything condemned in this book that is essential to the purest religion and the highest morality? After doubting
(416) and throwing discredit on so much, have we anything left worth preserving? Having cast so much of the cargo overboard to lighten the ship, is the vessel worth saving? Having cast away the accretions and superstitions of religion, we are only now just prepared to defend its essential and sublime principles. Let us see what remains.

I. *Our Faith in God remains.*—Not a God. The passage in the New Testament (John 4: 24) admits that "a" is an interpolation. There is no personality in God in a sense which implies limitation. God is spirit, and so spirit is God. Even Professor Hæckel, the German materialist, says: "This monistic idea of God, which belongs to the future, has already been expressed by Bruno in the following words: A spirit exists in all things, and no body is so small but contains a part of the divine substance within itself by which it is animated." The words God and religion have been so long associated with superstition and priestcraft that many liberal thinkers have a repugnance to both. But we must not let these perversions of sacerdotalism rob us of good words. We can conceive of God as the *Over-all and In-all Spirit of the Universe.* That spirit is causation, and matter, its palpable form, is one of its manifestations.

> We know that Nature's method of making worlds and brutes and men is by a uniform system of evolution, taking millions and billions of years to carry on the work to the present time, and that it is likely that it will take millions more to perfect it. When asked what spirit is, we answer, We do not know;
> (417) neither do we know what electricity is, nor can we answer one of a thousand questions that come up regarding the subtle and occult qualities of matter. We see no difference between the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer and the Unsearchable of Zophar in the book of Job. The Unknown Power is the Noumenon, the absolute Being in itself, the inner nature of force, motion, and even of conscience.

We have said, in substance, elsewhere: It is a great mistake to think of God as outside of and distinct from the universe. If there be a God at all, he is in the universe and in every part of it. We cannot properly localize him, and say that he is present in one place and not in another, or that he is in one place more than another. He must be everywhere and in everything. Anthropomorphic (man-like) views of God are what make atheists and agnostics.

Men constantly talk of the laws of Nature, forgetting that law itself is a product and cannot be a cause. The law of gravitation is not the cause of gravitation. A self-originating and self-executing law is unthinkable. The prevalence of law supposes the existence of a lawmaker and a law-executor. We accept the law of evolution, but cannot conceive of evolution independent of involution and an Evolver.

It may be said that this is "begging the question" by assuming the existence of an infinite God. But we deny that it is an assumption in its last analysis. What is known as the scientific method leads logically to the conclusion that there must be
(418) something that theists generally name God. You may call it "protoplasm," "molecular force," the "potentiality of matter," or even matter itself; and when you tell us what these words mean we will tell you what we mean by "God." Possibly we all mean the same thing. We know of the existence of God, as we know other things, by palpable manifestations.

Astronomers assumed the existence of Neptune from certain phenomena long before its existence could be demonstrated; and if the discovery had never been made the phenomena so long observed would have nevertheless justified the conclusion that there must be some stupendous cause for such unmistakable and marvellous perturbations.

When men talk of the eternity of matter we do not even profess to understand them. The most advanced scientists do not attempt to explain one of a thousand mysteries in which the phenomena of the material world is enshrouded. Why, then, should we be expected to explain where and how and when God came

into existence, or how he could have had an eternal existence or be self-existent? We affirm no more of God than materialists imply of matter, and we endow him with no attributes that they do not virtually ascribe to matter. So far as assumption is concerned, both stand on the same ground. They, indeed, call things by different names, but mean about the same thing. What theists prefer to call "the works of God" materialists call "Nature," "cosmic laws," "spontaneous generation,"
(419) "the potency of matter," "conservation of energy," "correlation of force," and "natural selection."

The fundamental error of modern scientists is that they limit their investigations to the physical and palpable, while we have demonstrable evidence of the existence of the spiritual and invisible. We know nothing of matter but from its properties and manifestations, and we have the same kind of evidence in regard to spirit, and know that it is superior to gross matter, and therefore cannot be tested by the same crucibles. In the very nature of things a great cause must ever be imponderable and invisible. It cannot be weighed and measured, but must ever remain intangible and incomprehensible. The spirit in physical man in its relation to the Supreme Spirit is as the drop of water to the ocean or the single glimmering ray to the full-orbed, refulgent sun. Men may talk of "force correlation," and trace its progress and products, but they must remain dumb as to the beginning or origin of force unless they accept the doctrine of an *intelligent First Force.* There is no way of accounting for the existence of spirit, of life, of intelligence, but by premising the prior existence of spirit, life, and intelligence. Like only causes like. An egg does not come from a stone, and the ascidian did not come from a lifeless rock.

The logical conclusion from the facts and principles herein suggested is that there must be an intelligent First Cause of all things—an all-pervading, fecundat-
(420) ing, animating Spirit of the universe; and we prefer to call this God. Science has taught us the processes of his work, and denominates them the "laws of Nature." In point of fact, as little is known of the origin and essence of matter as of spirit, and there is as good ground for agnosticism in the former as in the latter. There is therefore no necessary conflict between true science and a rational theism or monism.

It is a rational proposition that something must have been before what is called creation. There must have been an *intelligent potency*, and that power theists call God. Materialism in its last analysis ascribes to matter all that theists ascribe to God. It gives matter an eternal self-existence—endows it with an inherent infinite intelligence and an omnipotent potency. It spells "God" with six letters instead of three. It makes a God of matter, and then denies his existence!

We now submit that it is more rational to postulate the existence of an eternal Supreme Intelligence and Power, the Creator and Ruler of all things visible

and invisible, who is the Author and Executor of the laws by which both mind and matter are governed. This Supreme Being is alone the Self-existent One, and what are called the properties and modes of inert matter are but the proofs and manifestations of his eternal power and Godhead. There cannot be a poem without a poet, nor a picture without an artist. There cannot be a watch or other complex machine without an inventor and artisan. The universe is the sublimest of all poems, and Cicero well said that it would be easier to conceive that Homer's
(421) Iliad came from the chance shaking together of the letters of the alphabet than that the atoms should have produced the cosmos without a marshalling agency. The visible and palpable compel us to acknowledge their counterpart in the invisible and intangible, and we cannot rationally account for the origin of man without postulating the existence of an Intelligence and Power greater than humanity.

We are reproached for the inconsistency of believing in a Power we cannot comprehend, and endowing him with attributes of which we can form no just conceptions. Atheists do not seem to realize that they are guilty of a greater inconsistency. They tell us that we believe in a Being of whom we can form no conception, but they themselves must form some conception of such a Being, else how could they deny his existence?

There is no difficulty in admitting the existence of a Supreme Power if we do not attempt to comprehend and describe it. Matthew Arnold says: "We too would say 'God' if the moment we said 'God, you would not pretend that you know all about him." His definition of God is indeed vague, but vastly suggestive: "An enduring Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." This suggests the moral element in the unknown Power. There is not only a spiritual sense in man which recognizes the supersensuous, but there is an indwelling witness to the eternal principle of rightfulness. The sentiment of oughtness is inherent and ineradicable. Every man who is not a moral idiot has a feeling that certain
(422) things ought and ought not to be—that there is an essential right and wrong. Human intuition sees and feels this mysterious Power that answers to our Ego, and from which it proceeds; and this inward conviction cannot be eradicated from the average mind by the pretensions of science. The patient watcher in the dark room at the terminus of the ocean cable sees in his suspended mirror the reflection of an electric spark, and he at once recognizes it as a message from the operator three thousand miles away. So God is seen by the aspiring and contemplative in the concave mirror of man's own spirit, and, though it is a mere reflection, a spark, a flash, it clearly proves the existence of the Central Magnet. It is this recognition of the moral element that forms the basis of moral government and of that worshipfulness which has manifested itself among all nations, barbarian and civilized.

It is safe to assume that the average Atheism is disbelief in the God of the dominant theology, and not in the Ultimate Power that makes for righteousness. Vulgar, anthropomorphic conceptions of God, which endow him with certain speculative attributes, are condemned by reason and science; but nevertheless phenomena have something behind them, and energy has something beneath it, and all things have something in them which is the source of all phenomena and energy; and this enduring, all-pervading Power is our sure guarantee of the order of the universe. And this Power theists persist in calling God. Theologians
(423) may call this Pantheism, but it is only seemingly so. There is a vast difference between saying that everything is God, and that God is in everything. The old watchmaker-mechanician idea, a God separate and outside of the universe, has become obsolete, and science and reason and the law of progressive development now compel men to reshape their conceptions of God as identical with the Cosmos, plus the Eternal Power.

Herbert Spencer has beautifully said: "But amid the mysteries, which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that man is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." The felt and the seen have their fulness in the unseen and intangible, and the visible impels us to seek its counterpart and complement in the invisible.

II. *Our Faith in Religion remains.*—And here the question comes up, What is religion? The commonly-accepted meaning of the word is as derived from the Latin *religare*, which means "to bind back or to bind fast." We do not accept the definition, because it is suggestive of *bondage*. It implies a previous harmonious relation with God which had been lost. It favors the dogmas of the fall of Adam and man's alleged reinstatement and "binding back" to the divine allegiance, through what is called, in theological parlance, a "redemptive scheme." It is a significant fact that Lactantius, a theologian of the early part of the fourth century, was the first to apply the word religion to "the bond of piety by which we are bound to God." Augustine of the fifth
(424) century followed his example, and so did Servius about the same time; and their example has been followed by theologians ever since, presumably because it favors the dogmas of the fall of Adam and the redemption by Christ. But the highest classical authorities derive the word religion from *relegere* or *religere*, signifying "to go through or over and over again in reading, speech, or thought—to review carefully and faithfully to ponder and reflect with conscientious fidelity."

Cicero must have understood the original meaning and origin of the Latin word, and he took this view of the subject. He lived more than three hundred years

before Lactantius, and he said: "But they who carefully meditated, and as it were considered and reconsidered all those things which pertained to the worship of the gods, were called religious, from religere." The word *religio* was in common use in ancient Rome in the sense of *scruple*, implying the consciousness of a natural obligation wholly irrespective of the gods. The oldest popular meanings of the word *religion were faithfulness, sincerity, veracity, honor, punctiliousness, and conscientiousness.*(1) Religion, then, in its true meaning, is the great fact of *duty, of oughtness or right-fulness, of conscience and moral sense.* Its great business is to seek conformity to one's highest ideal. It consists in an *honest and persistent effort by all appropriate means to realize ideal excellence and to transform into actual character and practical life.*

(1) See A Study of Religion, by Francis E. Abbot.

(425) Religion in this sense is universally approved. It is false religion which is condemned. It is what some men would require you to believe in spite of history, science, and self-consciousness. It is superstition, bigotry, credulity, creed, sectarianism, that men detest. Religion is innate and ineradicable in man, and there is a natural religion concerning which man cannot be skeptical if he would. Bishop Butler has well said that the morality of the gospel is "the republication of natural religion and it would be easy to show the evolution of religion from very small beginnings and how this work is going on to-day.

Regarding religion as an evolution, a development, and not as something as inflexible as a demonstrated proposition in mathematics, we are all the while expecting an improvement. We have a right to expect that Christianity should be better than more ancient religions, because it is the latest; and so it is in many respects. But we have a right to expect that this improvement will go on with the lapse of time. The religion of the nineteenth century is an improvement on the religion of the first century, but we are reaching forward to greater perfection. Even the system of morals taught in the New Testament is defective. We want something purer and better, and it is rapidly coming. All true religion is natural, and its morality relates to the mutual and reciprocal claims of men arising from organized society. If we are right in our dealings with our fellow-men, we cannot be out of harmonious relations with God. All happiness here and hereafter
(426) depends upon our knowledge of the order of the universe and the conformation of our lives to it. It is impossible to divorce true religion from real science, and the more we know of the latter the more we shall have of the former. Whatever tends to promote pure religion ought to be encouraged, and no man has any more reason to be ashamed of his religion than he has to be ashamed of his appetite. We sum up our ideas of religion by saying: Do all the good you can to all the persons you can by all the means you can, and as long as you can.

III. *The Scriptures remain for just What they are.*—Portions of the Bible command our most profound reverence and our most unqualified admiration. We respond heartily to some of the truly excellent moral maxims of the Bible, and read with rapture some of the selections of poetry from the Hebrew prophets. But right in close connection we often find stories of uncleanness, fornications, adulteries, and incests that the vilest newspaper of today would not dare publish. Jael meanly murders Sisera, and is praised for it, while the deceit and treachery of Rahab are commended in the New Testament. The story of Boaz and Ruth is only fit for a dime novel. Solomon's Song is full of lasciviousness. Abram lies. Moses gets mad. David commits adultery and murders Uriah. Jacob is deceitful and a trickster; and so on to the end. Polygamy is shown to have been the rule, and not the exception, among Jehovah's favorites. War is everywhere tacitly justified, and slavery is practised and not an abolitionist opens his mouth. We go
(427) to the New Testament, and He who is called the "Perfect One" curses a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season, drives out with small cords men engaged in legitimate business, upsets their tables, and uses the most violent and reproachful language toward them. He shows want of respect for his mother, and is ambiguous and evasive in his conversation with the woman of Canaan—says he does not know whether he is going to the feast at Jerusalem or not, and then straightway sets out for the Holy City, and makes believe by his actions that he is going to one place, when he is actually going to another.

We want a higher morality than is taught in the Bible. We want higher and more noble conceptions than are given in the parable of the "Unjust Judge," and more just and equitable principles than are taught in the parable of the "Unjust Steward" or the "Laborers in the Vineyard" or the "Ten Talents." We want a morality that relates to this life rather than to the next We do not want the possession of property held up as a crime, and poverty represented as a virtue entitling one to a seat in the future kingdom. We want good homes to live in now, rather than "mansions in the skies." We do not want a morality that appeals to selfishness only, that discriminates in favor of celibacy, and that only tolerates marriage as a remedy for lust, as taught in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians. We want a higher morality than the morality of even the New Testament.

(428) It is difficult to speak to ears polite of the obscenity of the Bible. There are more than one hundred passages of the most coarse and vulgar description. To print these in a book and send it through the United States mails, if law were impartially administered, would put a man in the penitentiary. There are entire chapters that reek with obscenity from beginning to end. We cannot tell you about

Onan, and Tamar, and Lot and his two daughters, and scores of other obscene matters. There are passages even in the New Testament that cannot be mentioned in the presence of a virtuous woman. When we enter a lady's parlor and see the richly-gilded Bible upon the centre-table, we shudder as we remember the obscenity that is contained between its costly lids. When we see a young girl tripping along our streets, Bible in hand, we wonder if she knows that she carries more obscenity than Byron ever wrote, than Shelley ever dreamed of, than the vilest French novelist ever dared to print.

We have very grave doubts about putting the Bible into the hands of children. They are, through it, made familiar with much that is demoralizing. We have many reasons for rejecting the dogma of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and of their infallibility. These fragmentary writings must be judged by their merits—by what they are. It has been shown by the author of Supernatural Religion that we gain more than we lose by taking this rational view of the Bible. An illusion is lost, but a reality is gained which is full of hope and peace. The unknown
(429) men who mostly wrote the little pamphlets which make up the Bible probably did the best they knew—that is, they wrote according to the degree of their development—but some of the writers were on a very low plane. We should read these books and all other sacred writings of all nations just as we study geology—as showing what was in the mind of man when the books were written, 'just as we learn from the earth's strata the history and order of the various periodic formations. The bibles of the ages are accessible to every man who can read. All of them contain much that is valuable, with much that is frivolous, superstitious, and false. But these books belong to our race, and happy is the man who knows how to use them wisely. He who rejects all makes as great a mistake as he who accepts all. The true position is that the Bible contains the best thoughts of many of the best men that have lived in the ages of the past, expressed according to their light; and, while their obvious errors should be rejected, whatever commends itself to our reason, according to the best light of to-day, and to which each man's own inspiration and spiritual discernment responds, should be reverently studied and highly esteemed. Religion is not a product of the Bible, but the Bible is a product of religion—natural religion—though often misunderstood and perverted. We do not throw aside the bibles, but accept them for just what we find them to be worth. We eat the kernel and throw away the shell.

IV. Our most Implicit Faith in the Continuity of Life remains.—We have no more
(430) confidence in Materialism than we have in Atheism. We believe that some men at least are immortal—that the intellectual and moral giants should be blotted out at death is unthinkable. We find in this doctrine of a future state much that has a moral tendency. It inspires self-respect and esteem. It

> leads to a proper appreciation of humanity. It inspires hope for the future. It affords comfort in bereavement. It furnishes a proper motive for aspiration and progress.

When we consider the millions of years that have been employed in bringing man to his present high estate, it is rational to assume that a capacity for such immense progress is good ground for faith in still greater progress, so that there shall be no end to the advancement and attainments of humanity. If primitive man was not immortal, there may have been a time when he became immortal, just as there is a time when the embryo becomes a conscious, breathing babe, and when the undeveloped child begins to exercise the functions of rationality and becomes an accountable being. It is not true that even the extreme Darwinian doctrine is necessarily opposed to the doctrine of a future life for man. On the contrary, its fundamental principles suggest the hypothesis of immortality.

If the "conservation of energy" is a true principle of science, it favors the faith of man in the doctrine of a future life. Greatness and goodness developed in man must be "conserved," and how can it be done if death is a destroyer? The "persistency of force" in the human personality must at least be equal to the pri-
(431) mary elements which environ that personality. Is it rational to suppose that the sweep of evolution which has brought man from such unfathomable depths will not carry him up to still more illimitable heights? Are these vast achievements of Nature to be so un-thriftily wasted? Do not the products of a past eternity point unmistakably to still greater things in an eternity to come?

And, then, does not the scientific doctrine of the "indestructibility of matter" favor the belief in life after death?

The theory of "natural selection" also favors the doctrine of a future life, and never appears so real and so beautiful as when we realize that as man progresses in everything that is grand and good he voluntarily falls in with this natural law, and of choice not only selects that which is most to be desired, but by self-denial and almost superhuman exertions strives to attain the highest ideal of his heavenly aspirations. The unwearied effort of the most highly-developed men to reach a higher perfection and a more exalted excellence is evidence that Nature is true to herself, and that man will not be blotted out of conscious existence just as he first clearly perceives the essential difference between good and evil. Having tasted the fruit of the tree of life, he is destined to live for ever.

It is certainly a significant fact that the faith of man in, and a desire for, a future life are strongest in his moments of greatest mental and spiritual exaltation. If this is an illusion, it is strange that it should be particularly vivid when he is
(432) in his most god-like moods and when he is most in love with the beautiful, the true, and the good. Is it possible for Nature to thus trifle with and deceive and

disappoint man when he is most serious and truthful, and when all the elements of his better nature are in the ascendant and predominate over everything that is gross and perishable?

A future life and an immortal one must exist to enable man to reach that perfection to which he aspires, and feels himself bound to attain as the only end worthy of his being, and which, during the brief span of mortal life, is never reached even by the most virtuous. Nature cannot be so blind, so stupidly improvident, as to throw away her most precious treasures, gathered by so much labor and suffering, and not permit man to carry forward the great work, in which he has just began to succeed, to that perfection to which all his aspirations unmistakably converge.

Then every cultivated man realizes as age increases that his attainments and successes in this ephemeral life fall far short of, and are absolutely inadequate and disproportionate to, his inherent powers; and it is irrational to conclude that his very existence is to be blotted out and life itself become utterly extinct just as he has learned how to live, and what life is, and what is his " being's end and aim." We do not desire to argue this question here: we only make a profession of our faith.

V. Our Faith in the Doctrine of Present and Future Rewards and Punishments remains.—While it is irrational to accept the horrible dogmas of sacerdotalism as to the eternal torments of the wicked, it is equally unreasonable to believe that all men enter upon a state of perfect happiness without regard to moral character.

(433)

The doctrine of rewards and punishments after death is clearly suggested by the principles of natural religion which have been recognized by all men, pagan and Christian. That virtue brings its own reward and vice its own punishment is a fact in the experience of men in this life. It must be so in the life to come, as the order of the universe cannot be changed by time or place. No valid objection can be made to the principle of future punishment. But its nature and object must be taken into the account. True punishment is never arbitrary nor vindictive. It is remedial, reformatory, disciplinary, and has respect to the constitution of moral government and the best interests and welfare of its subjects. Suffering is a consequence of sin, not a judicial penalty, and happiness is not a favor conferred by grace, but a legitimate product of right being rather than of right doing. Men are rewarded or punished, both in this life and the life to come, not so much for what they have done or not done as for what they are. Suffering is intended to put an end to that which causes suffering, and is for the good of the sufferer. In this world and in all possible worlds sin must be a source of suffering, and goodness

a fountain of happiness. The degree of happiness or misery of man after death
(434) must be in proportion to the degree of his perfection or imperfection in character evolved during life that will constitute his "meetness."

The same penal code must prevail in the next life that prevails here, and it may be thus summarized: (1) Suffering is a consequence of imperfection and wrong-doing. (2) Imperfection and wrong-doing will meet their appropriate punishment in the future life as in this world. (3) The effect will only continue so long as the cause exists. (4) Men will for ever make their own heaven or hell, and there is good reason for believing that the sufferings of many persons after death will be, beyond all conception, awful in the extreme. (5) But the "immortal hope" justifies the conclusion that all men will, sooner or later, be established in holiness and happiness.

In response to the question, *After death—what?* the proper answer to the interrogative is, *In life—what?* Death is transition, not transmutation. It is emigration, not Pythagorean transmigration. Change of place does not make change of character. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that a man after death is just what he was before death. Every man will gravitate to his own place. There will be as many grades of moral character after death as in this life, and therefore as many heavens and hells. Misers and drunkards and libertines will still be such. Those who love the pure and beautiful, the true, the right, the unselfish, and the humane will still have the same desires and tastes after death as before death, and
(435) will naturally gravitate to kindred spirits.

After mature reflection the conclusion must be reached that the greatest happiness of which man is capable arises from three sources: (1) The perception of new truth; (2) Its impartation to others; (3) Doing good to others. A more rational conception of future blessedness than this is impossible.

If these views are correct, it is the highest wisdom to cherish and cultivate on earth and during life the tastes, the desires, the affections, the principles which in themselves constitute the highest bliss of saints and angels in all possible worlds. And as to hell after death, we have nothing to fear but the hell we may carry with us—the hell of unholy lust, the hell of unsanctified passion, the hell of selfishness, the hell which follows wrong living and wrong doing.

But we must bring this book to a close. The writer is a firm believer in God, in religion, and in morality; he accepts the Bible for just what it is. He believes in the continuity of life after death and in future rewards and punishments. If he believed that he had written anything in this book to weaken faith in these doctrines, he would commit the manuscript to the flames instead of to the printer.

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